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RAHEL: HER LIFE AND LETTERS.

Die Einfalt spricht: ich sage dir, der Gott
sorgt Wirklichkeit;
die aber sagt: ich weiß es, ist nicht der
Rechnung wert.

1817

RAHEL:

HER LIFE AND LETTERS.

BY

MRS. VAUGHAN JENNINGS.

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Thomas Carlyle,

WHO FIRST MADE

Rahel

KNOWN IN ENGLAND.

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RAHEL: HER LIFE AND LETTERS.

CHAPTER I.

Wide horizon, eager life,
Busy years of honest strife;
Ever seeking, ever founding,
Never ending, ever rounding;
Guarding tenderly the old,
Taking of the new glad hold,
Pure in purpose, bright in heart—
Thus we gain—at least a start!—GOETHE.

AMONG those assertions which have of late years become axioms, is that which affirms the intellectual vigour of the Germans. We accept without a question the professorial statement that "all the best books are German books," and yet our most modern experience has not led us to look for any special intellectual delight in German society generally, still less in that of German women.

It is with some surprise therefore that we trace, in the letters and memoirs connected with the early part of this century in Germany, the influence of more or less gifted women upon the writers of that time.

We all believed long ago in the eulogy of Tacitus upon the womanliness of the German women, and in those

poets of the middle ages, the Walthers, Gottfrieds, Frauenlobs, who were never weary of extolling that grace and beauty which we will hope were not altogether ideal. But it is hard, in the face of the combined luxury and household drudgery of the present day, to realise the more intellectual life, led by women as well as by men in many parts of Germany, sixty or seventy years ago.

The French Revolution, in its wide-spread influence, brought to German women a higher recognition than they had ever yet received. As by a sudden inspiration, the dawning century began to appreciate the intellectual sympathy, the suggestive genius, which are perfectly compatible with the smallest household duties and with the all-pervading care for others which is the special and compensating privilege of women.

This appreciation reached its climax in Berlin, in the enthusiastic homage rendered to Rahel Levin. As a representative woman, she is at once the creation and the expression of the quick-pulsed life of a stirring epoch in European history. Her character can only be fully understood in connection with those events in which she took her share, and with that society of which she formed the controlling centre.

Rahel attained her social position in spite of circumstances. To her were denied those advantages which surrounded the early years of Madame de Staël and of Madame Récamier. Rank, wealth, beauty, she had not. It was the simple force of her acute intellect in its rare combination with an ardent emotional nature that attracted towards her the ablest minds of her time. From

the variety of her friendships we learn the breadth and many-sidedness of her character. If we contrast the thoughtful tenderness of Henriette Herz with the daring intellect and passion of the Countess Pachta, the purity and earnestness of Fichte with the unscrupulous cleverness of Gentz, we become aware of an elasticity of friendship almost unintelligible to us with our feelings of insular reserve. But Rahel possessed a magnetic power for drawing out the best nature of all those with whom she came in contact. She had for each, sympathy or counsel, admiration or censure, as the case might demand.

The influence of her *salon*, with certain interruptions during the War of Liberation, extended over some twenty years. It differed from its older rivals in Paris, that of Madame de Staël, for instance, chiefly in the breadth of its interests, and this precluded its ever sinking into a coterie. The visitors of Madame de Staël were concerned mainly about politics; while the men and women who gathered round Rahel, from their great variety of gifts, ministered to the spread of a universal culture. Science, art, society, philosophy, theology, were all represented by people of more or less talent, and became subjects of daily interest and discussion. Her *salon* might be said to represent a miniature Renaissance, whose wider development, like that of its great prototype, was hindered by the outer barbarism of war.

It was at the blooming Whitsuntide of the year 1771, that the Levin household was gladdened by the birth of the first child. Probably no member of it then cared to speculate about the career which we have anticipated in

1771. the above remarks. All had present occupation enough in the precarious state of the mother, and in shielding from adverse influences the tiny spark of new life. Carefully rolled in cotton wool, the first hours of the child's existence were passed under the unceasing watchfulness of doctor and nurse. This ordeal survived, she grew and flourished, and in due time received the name of Rahel Antonie Frederike Levin.

The circumstances surrounding the childhood of Rahel do not form a pleasant picture, or augur well for future development. Her organisation was susceptible in the extreme, alike to pain or pleasure. During her early years she was wayward and impatient of restraint. Frau Levin never found the clue to the child's character, and as years passed on misconceptions arose on both sides, which were a cause of intense pain to Rahel's affectionate nature. Mother and daughter never understood each other. Her father was a well-known jeweller in Berlin, in easy though not wealthy circumstances. He was an autocrat in the family circle, and his tyranny was a continual source of irritation to Rahel and of suffering to her mother, who yielded everything for the sake of peace, and was crushed in spirit and in health by his continual harshness.

Rahel was early taught to seek social and intellectual sympathy beyond the family circle, and her favourite resort was the house of the Jewish philosopher and reformer, Moses Mendelssohn. There was no actual *Judengasse* in Berlin, as at Frankfort, and the position of the Jews was less ignominious than in other parts of the country. It is true that Israelitish descent

was a barrier to advancement under government, to professorships, or state appointments; but it did not prevent the appreciation of Jewish gold and Jewish learning by needy and erudite Christians. It was their learning and intellectual power which gave to Friedländer, Moses Mendelssohn, Marcus Herz, and others, a social position beyond the attainment of Jews in less cultivated cities. 1787.

Rahel's early friends were Henriette and Dorothea Mendelssohn, bright, intelligent girls, in advance of her in years as well as in all matters of technical training. Their father was remarkable for his belief in the education of daughters as well as of sons, and no pains were spared by him to secure their being highly educated in the true sense of the words. Their natural powers were brought out, tested, developed; their imaginations had full play, and they grew up able to employ their trained mental faculties upon all questions that came within their reach. Thus, without any remarkable gift of genius or of beauty, they were sought after to the end of their days as women whose companionship was always desirable and delightful. Other friends they also had in common, among whom we shall find the beautiful and accomplished wife of Marcus Herz. At sixteen Rahel was not learned, not even technically well educated. She was self-trained, and read people as other girls read books. She could write clever, chatty letters, but was quite unequal to a work like that of Mademoiselle Necker at the same age, upon Montesquieu's *Esprit des Lois.*

Rahel's youth was quiet and uneventful. There is only

Æt. 16. 1787. one incident bearing strongly upon her future character, which has come down to us. A burly French gentleman, in the inevitable powder and pigtail of the day, with fierce eyebrows and broad features, pitted with small-pox, was to be seen walking about Berlin. He called upon the king, carried his own letters to post, studied the world through his lorgnette, behaved like any ordinary mortal, and yet was no less a person than Mirabeau. Like all other visitors to Berlin at that time, he sought an introduction to the house of Marcus Herz, and it was probably there that Rahel first made his acquaintance. As yet, his lawsuits and love affairs had not rendered him notorious, nor had his association with the nobler movements of the French Revolution elevated him into a popular hero. But Rahel at sixteen was at once arrested by the novelty and boldness of his ideas. His resistless eloquence, his unresting energy, stirred her waking thought, and roused her enthusiastic admiration. The seeds were then sown of that love of liberty which bore fruit for her country in the day of need, and in a later and more peaceful time caused her *salon* to be looked on with suspicion by a feeble and ignoble government.

Her health appears to have required frequent change of scene, and Teplitz became a favourite resort, not more on account of the mineral waters and fine climate than of the charming scenery and pleasant society always to be found there. In 1795 she was there alone with her maid, and consoles herself by writing letters to Gustav Brinckmann, a young Swede, afterwards ambassador at Berlin, whose friendship for her continued throughout her life.

Æt. 24.
1795.

To Gustav von Brinckmann, in Berlin.

Teplitz, August, 1795.

It is right and proper and wise and good that I should write to you, although I cannot adequately thank you for the book: the writing itself will be an acknowledgment. What is there so interesting as a new acquaintance? So, first of all, about Herr von Burgsdorf.' I thank you for the thought of making us acquainted. Tell him we already know each other. Goethe is a sufficient connecting link for anything that is or can be called human. I had hoped, however, that the nearer acquaintance might have developed itself with pleasure to myself and without discomfort to him. Besides, I do already know something of him and his friendships, and so forth.

You will have from me to-day only the most disjointed questions, by no means a letter. I hear from no one. However bad I may be, I am still better than others at correspondence. Because I, upon principle and system, do not write, they also do not. What I do with reason, they follow without reason, and the blame recoils upon me, because they carefully reserve all means of defence. Do not imagine that it distresses me, for what is there to write about? The only people who write what is worth having are Jettchen and Dorothea Veit. All that is interesting, intelligent, or amusing to me, I have already read in your two letters. So it was only a mild passionless upbraiding of destiny. . . . The lady upon whose account I really continue to stay here, is one of the first order. She would be perfect if she had only once been thoroughly unhappy. (Can you understand this! Please do, this time,

Æt. 24. 1795. without an explanation.) Moreover, she is one of the most charming creatures, blonde and blue-eyed, with such a face, figure, grace, expression, character—in short, if she were to be only two days in Berlin, you would be for ever relieved of that most inconvenient guest called a heart.

Think how I am living here now on account of this Countess Pachta,—of the fine air, of my health, of innumerable little reasons. Goethe says in Götz, "Everything has two or three causes." Still I do not live with the countess, only near her; quite alone with my servant. I dine and sup alone; in short, I am given over to the winds and waves. Yet I am not more deserted than I feel at home; it is the same always. I am not sure myself whether it is a happiness or a misfortune. Meanwhile I will call it happiness, because any day one may become more miserable, and it is well to be beforehand. In general terms, I ought now to be called happy, since I do not wish for more happiness—I know there is no such thing. I am only waiting for a little health, and then to collect a few ideas. I feel as though many years ago something within me had been shattered, and I have a kind of savage pleasure in the thought that it can never be bruised and broken again. . . .

I always believe that everything that is, or that happens, has its appointed influence. Why then should wishes be without result? Wishes that are intelligent, genuine, fervent, such as we think would draw down the stars, these surely must accomplish something. I think they belong to the general harmony of things and must do their work. For although nothing may be right, yet we

do see through the tangled, crooked lines where they might be straighter. I hold that an earnest wish ought to accomplish something. In this case it would be my strongest *right* to see Goethe. Why is he always to be seen by his washerwoman and bootcleaner, by aristocrats and men who write on law and the origin of stones? Æt. 24. 1795.

I thank you, as I ought, and as you could wish, for your sympathy. I am glad that my brother has showed you the letter. I pity you with the pity of a connoisseur about the teeth—and the peruke is simply dreadful. . . . Is Humboldt still in Berlin? What a pity your neighbour is gone—that comes of speculation! The Countess Pachta is a friend of the uncivilised Herr Hess, your Hamburg friend. I shall come again about the end of August. It will be good and bad then, as it is now. My friend Gualtieri is still here. Farewell! I fare tolerably. Apropos, there is here a young, handsome, and amiable sister-in-law of Bernstorff, who tells me that the Meyers will be here in a few days. Adieu. Your R.

From all the letters of this period we gather that matters were not smooth in the Levin home. In addition to family disagreements, Rahel had anxiety and sorrow of her own, which are obviously alluded to in the above letter, and no doubt were the town talk of Berlin. Rahel had become engaged to a Count von Finkenstein after a long and persistent courtship. She yielded probably in spite of her better judgment. With her quick perception she must have foreseen those inevitable difficulties, in which the count would not believe until they came tangibly before him. At length, after much anxious

Æt. 24. 1795. hesitation, Rahel released the count from his engagement, mainly on the ground of the difference in social rank, and the strong objection entertained by his family to his marriage with a Jewess. Thus this harassing affair, which had extended over several years, was brought to a conclusion never afterwards to be regretted. At the same time, a temperament so ardent, and a nervous system so finely strung as that of Rahel, could not pass through such an experience without deep suffering both of mind and body. A long and severe illness followed, after which, in 1800, she made a somewhat lengthened stay in Paris.

Rahel had long been familiar with French literature and language. She had known well many of the French *émigrés* who had been from time to time resident in Berlin, and therefore found herself at once able to enter into the thought and life of the lively capital. Jean Paul said of a letter which was shown to him, "It is worth ten descriptions; no one has thus, at a glance, understood and characterised the French people. What eyes they were to see, so keenly and clearly, the truth, and only the truth."

It is interesting to observe in the few letters that have been preserved of this date, how Rahel, in the intensity of her own sense of loss and loneliness, and in her physical prostration, still occupies her thoughts with those dear to her at home. She still cares for all their trifling needs. Certain little children in whom she is interested are on no account to have their curls cut, they are to use "*huile antique* put on with a small brush." She further entreats that they may not be sent away to school before her.

return. Then her sister Rosa, who is about to be married, receives strict injunctions not to fret her mother about her outfit, to buy only what is necessary, and leave the rest until she reaches her new home in Amsterdam, Rahel undertaking to make full compensation in the new Paris fashions she is prepared to bring with her. Æt. 24. 1795.

"News I never write," says Rahel to Rosa, "no one need ask me for it. You may have it in the papers, but I know none, and none shall pass my lips or my pen. We have mild summer weather, and can be in the Tuileries immediately when it does not rain. But only think of it; there is no one here for whose sake I care to go into a theatre, and there are some twenty open every day. At home I have the people, but no plays: here it is reversed. But I bear all with patience."

Again to Rosa in Amsterdam after her marriage:—

"Since your last letter I have felt most sad. You are gone! No Rosa will again come out to meet me with faithful step and heart, knowing my sorrow through and through. When I am ill in body or in soul, I shall be alone —alone. Your step is no longer in those evermore empty rooms. To risk a happiness. O God! I cannot even *risk* it. But all is well with me! . . . . Dear Rosa, what may not lie before you! But no, your name is Rosa, you have blue eyes, and quite another life than I, with my star, name, and eyes. Life seems over for me. I know it, but cannot feel it. I have a red heart like others, though with a dark, hopeless, ugly fate. But after all it is not fate, nor poverty, nor anything of that kind. But!——

"Greet mamma a thousand times. Tell her I congratulate

Æt. 24. 1795. her from my whole heart—the more that she never knew any joy through me—it was not God's will—but in her place I should have had great compassion for such a child. Still, she must not be sad about me! I know how much she has done for me, and I thank her with deep feeling. I think the more of it as she looks at things so differently. Tell her the destiny before me is like that of nations and great men who are borne up and down upon the sea of existence. From of old such men have seemed to me like spring blossoms carried by the wind, wildly tossed; none knows where they fall; only the fewest bear fruit; the seasons run their course; man goes carelessly on and has enough to do to live. Tell mamma this. God strengthen you. I look for a letter from Marcus. Then my journey must be determined by weather and roads. The trees blossom, but it is not spring as with us. Many things are uglier here in nature and elsewhere. Adieu! R. L."

It was at this time that Rahel first became conscious of the want of power to express the thoughts which crowded her active brain. While possessing the breadth and originality of thought, the brightness and fertility of intellect, the keen sensibility to suffering, which we admire in our own Mrs. Browning, she was denied the gift of poetic utterance. Her genius found for itself other channels of expression, and accomplished its appointed work in its own way. From Teplitz, in 1795, she writes to Baron Brinckmann:—

"Will you take a thought of mine and put it into heroic verse or rhyme—I think without rhyme would be best.

There was an illumination here yesterday, and we sat on the further shore of the lake to enjoy it. But instead of looking at the lamps, I looked at the water and at the sky: there was one bright immovable star. I saw it also reflected in the water, but the wind ruffling the surface, changed its shape and dimmed its lustre. So it is with men, I thought; we judge them from far off, disturbed and dulled by circumstances. Instead of the fixed star, we see only the moving water, and do not trouble to look upward." Æt. 24. 1795.

Again, in the same year to David Veit,[1] then studying philosophy and medicine in the University of Jena:—

"Tell me candidly, did you ever meet with a person cultivated after my fashion? I never did. Others, who are ignorant of a subject, are not even aware that they know nothing about it. But with me it is different. I know my ignorance and the cure for it, and yet remain as I was before. How can any one know so exactly, so thoroughly, so aesthetically, I might almost say, what is well written, and yet not be able to mend one's own work. My taste, my judgment, are continually ripening, but I express myself less clearly than the humblest woman who has only read the 'Three Friedrichs of Siegfried.' People with far more stupidity at command can write and speak better. I feel this every day, and sometimes to my annoyance. I should, at least, like to be able to trace the cause, since I am aware of the fact. I weigh every 'and,' 'well,' 'then,'—every syllable; I know perfectly every

[1] Appendix A.

Æt. 24. 1795. shade of difference between writers, and can characterise them better than most people, and yet my own work is not better for it. I know perfectly when I have written a good sentence, but still that does not help me. I even speak like a *roturier!* If I had not a few original thoughts, ignorant folks would say I also was ignorant."

This candour, although somewhat extreme in its expression, reveals the one failing which prevented Rahel from filling that definite place in literature to which she might well have attained. Personally associated with the earlier writers of the Romantic School, she lacked, with them, that plastic power which might have given to their imaginative genius appropriate form, and to posterity an abiding literature.

The ready appreciation of power in others, which we have seen in Rahel's early enthusiasm for Mirabeau, now showed itself still more strongly. First through her busy brain and tongue and pen was spread in all directions the tidings of the advent of a new poet. Rahel became the interpreter of Goethe, not only by the keenness of her intellectual perception (which forestalled the criticism of Schlegel), but by her sympathetic insight into his poetic world of thought. She shared his strong realism, and believed that his genius could express, as no poet yet had done, that harmony between the real and the ideal which was with her but a dim prophetic consciousness. It would appear to have been by force of contrast that Rahel's fervent nature was led so completely into captivity by Goethe's genius, with its calm pagan repose. It may be that in the intensity of her own enthusiasm

she was unconscious of what he lacked in this respect. Æt. 24.
She became one of the earliest victims of that "daemonic 1795.
fascination" which he exercised by his writings as well as in his personal intercourse. It must have been a wonderful experience to be roused, amid that slumbrous atmosphere of literary platitudes, by the appearance of "Götz von Berlichingen," and to read and enjoy it without the intervention of a generation of critics. Rahel was soon installed high-priestess of Goethe-worship in Germany. Throughout her note-books and letters much fragmentary criticism upon Goethe was scattered. It was subsequently collected by Varnhagen von Ense and forwarded to Goethe, by whom it was acknowledged with Olympian affability. Goethe, although he did not make the personal acquaintance of Rahel until some years later, knew her well by report, and in conversation with Horn, about 1795, thus spoke of her:—

"Yes, she is a charming girl; strong in her emotions and yet prompt in their utterance; the one fact gives her importance, the other makes her agreeable. We admire her great originality, we feel that it is charming and that we are delighted. Undoubtedly there are many people in the world who seem original, but we have no certainty that it is not an illusion; that what we take to be the movement of a lofty intelligence is not simply a passing whim. It is not so with her; so far as I know she is always the same, always equally animated yet self-possessed. In short, she is what I should call a beautifu soul,-the more you know of her the more you feel at tracfed and captivated by her."

Æt. 24. 1795. In reference to her love for his poetry, he continued:—

"It is doubly pleasant to me, because with her it is no general impression; she masters every idea in detail. A general impression is often a proof that we ground our admiration of a poet upon other people's opinions. If we have apprehended his work in detail for ourselves, we naturally show that we have pure emotions and clear thoughts of our own."

It was this common veneration for Goethe which first attracted Rahel toward Ludwig Tieck. In the old-fashioned family life of the Berlin rope-maker, in the background of the hempen coils, the young Ludwig had seen the literature of the past generation carefully treasured, and now the new poetry was received with open arms. The patriarch Tieck, while believing himself in all the fine phrases of the "Illuminati," inconsistently allowed that "Götz von Berlichingen" should become the household idol of his children. In the intervals of school, in the pouring rain under a dim street lamp, or in bed with a feigned cold, the young Ludwig still read Goethe. He went through a severe crisis of Wertherism, out of which he emerged, strengthened by the robuster study of Shakespere, to leave Goethe as a model and strike out paths—wandering ones perhaps—entirely his own. Rahel delighted in his genuineness of character, his vigour, his sarcasm, his fertile imagination, and her admiration ripened in the course of years to that heresy, shared only by a few, that "Tieck was the only poet worthy to stand *beside* Goethe."[1]

[1] Appendix B.

Rahel recognised not alone the critical faculty, but the creative power which placed him far above other writers of the Romantic School. Only in this sense, indeed, could he be ever spoken of as its head. His personal character was too reserved, too individual for him to associate himself with numbers, even as a leader. His enemies were numerous, but he suffered far less from them than from his avowed friends. He differed entirely from the later extravagances of the school, and remained unaffected by that æsthetic religiousness which betrayed many of them into the Roman Catholic Church. Æt. 24. 1795.

When Jean Paul came to Berlin, in 1804, to be caressed and fêtèd, one of his first introductions was to the house of Rahel. They were mutually charmed, and Rahel on her part was especially astonished to find Jean Paul, out of his books, so like the rest of the world, showing no sign of humour in his conversation, only the most genial *bonhomie*, so that at their first interview she exclaimed repeatedly, "You cannot be he."

In reference to this visit there is an account in Varnhagen's "Memoirs"[1] of a conversation he held with Jean Paul when he saw him at Baireuth a year or two later:—

"Among other greetings," writes Varnhagen, "I brought him one from Rahel Levin, with the modest question whether he remembered her? His whole face beamed with pleasure. 'How could one ever forget such a being?' he exclaimed energetically. 'She is an entirely original character, I liked her extremely, and the impression she made upon me is deepened as my own powers of perception have grown.

[1] Appendix B.

Æt. 32. 1803. She is the only woman in whom I have found genuine humour, the only humorous woman.' . . . . He then went on to praise other characteristics, and was not surprised when I interrupted him with the assurance that all the intellect, judgment, wit, which he thus praised, was to me much less than the depth and goodness of her heart. When I told him how many of her letters I had, some of my own and others given to me, he was quite jealous, and said if he lived in the same town with me he should insist upon having something, at least, out of every letter; that would be a real and original treasure; that Rahel wrote admirably when addressing some especial individual, but such personal stimulus was needed to draw her out; she never could with set purpose write a book. 'I can understand her now,' he continued, 'much better than when I was in Berlin, and should greatly like to meet her again. The more I think over some remarks and suggestions which she threw out, the more surprised I am at them. She is an artist opening out a new world; an exceptional being at war with ordinary life, or rather far away above it; and so she must remain unmarried.'"

Rahel did write subsequently a few letters to Jean Paul, and took occasion to remonstrate with him upon the unreality of the women in his books.

With the opening century we find Rahel to have won for herself a social position in Berlin. Before we see her in her *salon* it may be interesting to gain some information about the state of society in the "centre of culture." We cannot do better than retrace our steps a few decades, and seek a picture or two of Berlin daily life from among the recollections of Rahel's contemporary and friend, Henriette Herz.

CHAPTER II.

Daily, customary life, is a mean abode for man, unless he often opens the door and windows and looks out into a freer world beyond.—STERLING.

IN the dim oil-lighted streets of Berlin just a century ago, one almost omnipresent figure was that of the Jewish physician De Lemos. Preceded always by a servant carrying a lantern, he walked with slow and stately step, his compact figure well set off by immaculate silk stockings, buckle-shoes, gold-laced coat, and daintily-frilled linen. His carefully dressed wig was surmounted by a three-cornered hat, but he held the dignity of a physician to be imperilled by anything so common as a cloak. Happily for him and for his family circle, the buckles, gold braid, and dignity in general, were only professional accessories; and his loving temperament and genial pleasantry brightened the rare hours of slippered ease at home, making him the idol of the house. His wife held him in affectionate reverence, and revealed towards him the tender side of a nature which to all the outer world appeared reserved and cold. In the household circle she was a martinet, bent upon systematising everything, down to the smiles and tears of her daughters. She suffered from a complaint in the eyes, which probably was the cause of much of that irritable severity which disturbed the peace of an otherwise happy home.

1764. Henriette De Lemos was born in 1764. She was a favoured child, upon whom the traditional fairies showered lavishly their choicest gifts. Not the least enviable of these was that of elastic cheerfulness—rare as it is precious, and of priceless value to a life whose noonday heat was to be overshadowed by cloud and storm. All the stern régime of the mother broke down before the irrepressible Henriette. At ten years old she was full of life, of frolic, and of love, all brimming up into her dark brown eyes, in whose depths the gazer seemed to become lost, and uttering themselves in her alert and airy motion, whose buoyancy knew no repose, brooked no restraint.

She pursued her studies—writing, geography, arithmetic, and Hebrew—mostly at home, until it dawned upon Madame De Lemos that more feminine accomplishments were needful. Henriette was sent to a "sewing school," where the many hours of knitting, sewing, and embroidery were no doubt a great weariness to the active girl, who consoled herself by fetching from the circulating library, which she passed daily, books of all kinds. When about twelve years old she was a spectator of one of those theatrical performances common among her father's friends. Her interest was roused, and her delight knew no bounds when her parents accepted for her an invitation to take part in a similar performance. The charming face and figure of the child made her quite an acquisition. The character assigned to her was that of a country belle in an operetta. She studied her part, perfected her minuet, practised her little songs, and admired over and over again the enchanting dress in which she was to appear. What could be more perfect, she thought, than white silk and

rose colour, with silver-spangled boddice, white silk hat and china flowers? 1774.

Almost upon the eve of the play, the merry rehearsal party was stunned by the announcement that the Jewish elders had forbidden the representation. But in Henriette the organ of hope was large, and those china flowers must be worn. So, with the audacity of childhood, when the elders were assembled she appeared before the grating, and pleaded the cause of the discomfited performers. She concluded by telling them that it was beneath their dignity to interfere with the amusements of children. Strange to say, the greybeards retracted their prohibition, and the piece was triumphantly performed. In fact, the triumph of little Henriette brought so much flattery and so many invitations, that her parents had the sense to stop her further appearance upon the boards.

Before Henriette was fifteen her father accepted for her an offer of marriage from a man who was her senior by many years. Marcus Herz had lately established himself as a physician near the De Lemos family. He was a pupil of Kant, a student of philosophy as well as of medicine. He had come from Königsberg with some misgivings; he dreaded the pedantry of Berlin. Then as now, while the friends of the true Berliner called him well informed, his enemies denounced him as a prig.

Henriette had occasionally seen Marcus Herz as she passed his window with her beloved romances under her arm, and also in her father's house, where, however, he showed no special interest in her. At the time of her betrothal she appears to have had no definite feeling of any kind about him, but was childishly delighted with the

1779. prospect of becoming a *braut*. The position of the young lady who is engaged—the "bride," as the Germans call her—has its privileges. Those to which Henriette looked forward with special interest were, evening walks with Marcus Herz, more pocket-money, new bonnets, and above all, as soon as she was married, a *friseur* of her own. The engagement lasted three years, and scarcely fulfilled the lively promise, since evening walks and sentiment proved alike rare: the bridegroom preferred a game at whist, with Henriette sitting by his side. He also began to supplement a little the deficiencies of her desultory education.

Among the fragmentary reminiscences which Henriette wrote in later life is this account of her wedding day:—

"Many, many years have rolled by, but every moment of that day lives before me. I woke from an uneasy sleep with a feeling of intense sadness. The thought of leaving my family, especially my father, disturbed me. There was nothing in the future to which I looked forward that could dispel the gloom of my spirit. At any other time, the white satin robe they brought would have enraptured me. But through my streaming tears I saw it and wore it with perfect indifference.

"The bridegroom came, the guests assembled. My thoughts were all with my dear ones. The time of the ceremony approached. I felt that I must once more speak to my father. All my love at this moment could find no other utterance than in a tearful entreaty that he would pardon me if I had ever pained him, and would give me a parting blessing. He did so, embracing me

and weeping: then signing to me to go, he said, in a faltering voice, 'Child, do not break my heart.' These words I shall hear to my last moment. God did grant a blessing. I went forth into a rich and beautiful life. 1779.

"It was the first of December, 1779. The courtyard in which, according to Jewish custom, the baldachin was erected for the ceremony, lay deep in snow. Grand people, friends of the bridegroom, crowded round with cold and curious looks.' I was again made a show of, this time with pain. All was winter, within and without. The next morning the bride of fifteen years sat alone in her room. Full of conflicting emotions, I was longing intensely for one of the dear ones from home. Certainly they were all thinking of me. I hoped each moment would bring some one of them. At last I heard steps upon the staircase; it was a man's step; it must be my father. The door opens; a long-cherished desire is most inopportunely fulfilled; it is the hairdresser!"[1]

The married life of Henriette Herz bore richer fruit than might have been anticipated from so wintry and unpromising a beginning. An affectionate attachment grew up betwen the apparently ill-assorted couple, and Henriette soon overlooked the plainness of the face which gleamed with considerate kindness and was animated by a lively intellect. Her sincere affection and her unfailing tact enabled her to adapt herself perfectly to all her husband's plans and wishes, and "to make him as happy as it was in his nature to become through a wife." She was interested in his scientific studies, of some of

[1] "Henriette Herz: ihr Leben und Erinnerungen." Von J. Fürst.

1785. which she acquired a superficial knowledge. Throughout her life she prosecuted the study of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, as well as of most modern European languages. In English, French, and Italian she was able to express herself with fluency. Marcus Herz carefully directed her intellectual development, and guided, for a time at least, her literary tasks. In spite, however, of this intellectual sympathy, domestic life and its interests occupied but an infinitesimal portion of Herz's nature. Science was his passion, and to it thought, time, and energy were all devoted. His rapidly increasing practice brought him into contact with all circles of Berlin society, and his scientific researches made him to be sought out by students from all parts of Germany, whilst his lectures attracted not only scientific men, but dilettanti from the royal palace.

No one could have been better fitted to lead and entertain this varied social circle than Henriette Herz, distinguished as she was by beauty, tact, and that sprightly intelligence which made her the most charming of all listeners—patient, yet suggestive.

The classical character of her beauty has been well preserved in various busts and portraits taken by Anton Graff, Gottfried Schadow, and others. Even when at Rome, in her fifty-fifth year, she sat in one day to four different artists. All represent a face faultless in its oval, its Grecian profile, its brilliant complexion, surrounded by dark hair, and animated by resplendent brown eyes. Full of dignity as well as grace, her figure appears to have been equally faultless in its outline, and even in middle life obtained for her the title of "the tragic muse." It was

only the uninitiated who ventured to complain that in comparison with her imposing height the head appeared too small. To this perfection of form must be added that charm of manner natural to a character in perfect harmony with all its surroundings, that repose which is imparted by the certainty to please. It is not surprising, therefore, that at one time Henriette Herz was the standard by which all other beauties were tested in Berlin. 1785.

Such rare and happy association of personal beauty with a frank generous character and an ever-growing intelligence, naturally commanded much homage, not only from poetical youths but from learned men, in an age when time spent daily in the society of more or less cultivated women was a matter of course; when the men, making less haste to be rich, were able sometimes to make themselves agreeable; and the women, less absorbed in the exigencies of millinery and morning calls, had time to think as well as talk; in fact, before the entire dissimilarity of their aims and occupations had reduced mixed companies to that dead level of insipidity now observable alike in Belgravia and Berlin. The few young men who, in accordance with the fashionable gallantry of the day, held it to be "the thing" to worship at the shrine of Frau Hofräthinn Herz, she brought down to common sense with rapidity and tact. Rarely failing to discern the germ of genius or any other excellence where it existed, she would then transform the sonnet-writing admirer into a life-long friend.

The names of those literary men who frequented the house during the early married life of Henriette Herz have become so obscured by the greater ones which be-

1795. came prominent a few years later, that it is sufficient simply to mention Ramler, Engel, Moritz, Spalding, Reichardt the musician, Schadow the sculptor, and Fleck the tragedian. They formed among themselves small societies for reading aloud dramatic or other works, having fixed evenings, with regulations respecting members, sandwiches, and absentees. These gatherings were held in the house of Moses Mendelssohn, and later in that of his daughter Dorothea Veit. They were also gladly entertained by a certain Hofräthinn Bauer, wife to one of the court chamberlains, in winter at the castle, and in summer in a pleasant garden outside the town. Here, however, the young people (much to the disgust of their strong-minded hostess) were apt sometimes to break out into dancing or other frivolous amusement. On one occasion Henriette Herz thus sinned grievously in standing up with Alexander Humboldt, to learn from him the new *minuet à la Reine.*

After a year or two we meet with more familiar names, as Count Christian Bernstorff, Brinckmann, Fessler, Count Alexander von Dolma, the younger Humboldt, Frederick Schlegel, Schleiermacher, Gentz. Of these several belonged to the *Tugendbund*, of which Henriette Herz was an industrious member. It was an institution not for a moment to be confounded with that political *Tugendbund* called into existence some ten or twelve years later. Alike ignorant and careless of politics, the members were bound to devote all energy to their mutual edification, moral and intellectual. The *Bund* possessed a legal code and a special cipher of its own. It was probably a lingering relic of those larger secret societies which had spread their

network over Germany in connection with the expiring *Aufklärung*. William Humboldt was received into it, despite his own protestations of unworthiness; also Carl de Laroche, who became an intimate friend and correspondent of Henriette Herz. Among the ladies were Caroline von Dacheröden (afterwards Frau von Humboldt), Dorothea Veit, Henriette Mendelssohn, Caroline von Wolzogen, and Therese Huber, married later to George Forster. Letters and essays innumerable, poems and admonitions, passed continually between the members, who all addressed each other by the confidential "thou." 1795.

It is well known that the Germans in their social as well as in their political and literary affairs always wait for some impetus from without. One effect of the French Revolution and of the social freedom of the Consulate was seen in the opening of *salons* in Berlin somewhat after the Parisian model. With the character of the latter we are all familiar. We associate them with the glowing patriotism of Madame Roland, the passionate rhetoric of Madame de Staël, the dramatic mysticism of Madame Krudener, the refined coquetry of Madame Récamier. As the creation of a remarkable epoch, they have become a part of its history.

In Berlin, Henriette Herz appears to have been the first thus to throw open her house. But such gatherings, miscellaneous as they were, must not be supposed to represent more than one of the many wheels revolving in the ponderous machine of Berlin society. There was first of all the court circle, in which dignity and dulness reigned supreme, and were never even ruffled by those spasmodic court festivities which were periodically ordered to take

1796. place. The diplomatic circle came next, and maintained a decorous intimacy with the royal house. In it Haugwitz and others displayed that wonderful combination of imbecility and duplicity which resulted a few years later in the national disgrace of the Treaty of Tilsit. There were also the all-important military officers, indispensable at the state balls, ubiquitous in the streets, gardens, drawing-rooms, theatres of Berlin; some noble, some ignoble descendants of the trained bravos of Fritz; representatives of the Prussian army, faultless in its pipeclay, its epaulettes, its matchless uniformity of pigtail, but, as officers, mostly unfit to plan a campaign or even to lead a 'charge;'[1] staff and file alike destined in the future to retreat before the French without a shot, to fall beside Prince Louis Ferdinand at Saalfeld, or to hear the shout of victory upon the battle-field of Leipsic, and then die untended in its streets.

There was also a commercial circle, including both Jews and Christians, who believed in purple, fine linen, and bank-notes; who gave gorgeous entertainments, and advanced money to embarrassed noblemen and officers. Of learned men also there were a few, although the university was as yet in the future. They lived a quiet plodding life, breaking out occasionally into the evening dissipation of a pipe and glass of beer at their "Monday Club;" keeping their womankind in a position of due subordination, and excluding all mixed entertainments from their programme. Among these was Nicolai, the representative of German pedantry, the "Arch-Philister," who became a Sebastian for the arrows of Tieck's irony, and in whom the whole German *Philister-thum* was attacked

[1] Appendix C.

by the Schlegels and other Romanticists in the pages of the "Athenæum." 1796.

Where then are we to look for that intellectual society of which we have so often heard? It was but developing in the families of a few learned Jews, first in that of Moses Mendelssohn. His daughters, like all German girls, possessed an intimate circle of friends, married women and maidens, who quickly caught the infection of their eager intelligence. Among them were Henriette Herz and Rahel Levin, and it was through the intellectual activity of these young Jewesses that the spirit of the new era first became imperceptibly diffused. They gradually attracted young men of talent into their circle, who were followed by friends, wives, and sisters. Thus the leaven spread for ten or fifteen years, when Berlin, though then at its lowest depth politically, attained the climax of its literary glory.

Among the young men who were the first to brave the frowns of the Christian world, and enter this charmed circle, were Frederick Schlegel and Schleiermacher. In 1794 the latter received an appointment in a training institution in Berlin. He was introduced to Henriette Herz by Count Alexander Dolma, but the acquaintance was interrupted by his removal to Landsberg, where he remained for two years as assistant preacher. In 1796 he received the chaplaincy of the Charité, a public hospital outside Berlin. During the winter his friendship for Marcus Herz and his wife ripened rapidly. He rarely allowed anything to interfere with his regular evening visits to their house, and willingly faced the discomforts, if not the positive dangers, which lay in the darkness and

1779. unpaved roads between his house and theirs. At last they arranged for him a little lantern, to be hooked into the buttonhole of his coat; and thus, though laden with an umbrella and divers books, he could set out on his homeward journey in some hope of reaching the end with unbroken bones.

Schleiermacher was at that time a young man, small, plain, and ill-shaped, offering to the superficial observer no suggestion of future greatness. But the prescient sympathy of Henriette Herz soon discerned the jewel in the unpretending casket. From her he received his first impetus towards literary effort. To her discriminating judgment and to her genial friendship, under which, as under summer sunshine, his whole nature expanded, he owed that period of most vigorous intellectual development which marked the following ten years of his life.

Frederick Schlegel, when he came to Berlin, had introductions to Rahel and to Henriette Herz. The latter hastened to make him acquainted with Schleiermacher. Subsequently the new friends shared a suite of rooms. They were sometimes jestingly referred to as "the happy pair," Schleiermacher, with his feminine tenderness and susceptibility, forming the orthodox contrast to the aggressive predominance of Schlegel. Thus they entered together upon their translation of Plato. But as those sanguine travellers who set forth in parties, for mutual convenience, are invariably found returning home by different routes, so the two friends speedily struck out divergent paths for themselves. The natures of the two men were essentially antagonistic.

It is said of the acacia wood, that even when planed into

a door-post it will branch and bud and hang out its delicate green fringe above the threshold. Such intense vitality was Schleiermacher's special characteristic. Schlegel, on the other hand, reminds us of the spruce fir, whose progress is imperceptible and slow, and whether it has attained to one or many feet in height, still presents toward its neighbour the same unyielding uniformity of prickle. Each took his appropriate part in the society as well as in the literature of the day. The eminently social nature of Schleiermacher, his delight in the interchange of thought and the study of character, led him to spend many evening hours at the house of Rahel or of Henriette Herz. In either circle he was sure of genial welcome, of lively and varied social intercourse; while in Rahel's presence he was even contented frequently to occupy a subordinate position. 1798.

His friendship for Henriette Herz continued until his death, in 1834, but their correspondence ranges mainly from 1800 to 1815. The greater part of it was destroyed by her not long before her death. This holocaust was occasioned by the publication of diaries and letters which shocked her by their indiscreet revelations concerning those who had been dear and well known to her. And while admiring the reticence which prompted the sacrifice, we cannot but deplore the entire loss of her own letters, with many from Rahel and other contemporaries. A few of Schleiermacher's escaped, and were published in England some years since. From these we quote two passages, just to indicate the intellectual character of the influence exercised over him by Henriette Herz. Writing

1793. to his sister Charlotte, who lived in an almost conventual retreat among the Moravians, he says:—

"I spend much time just now with Henriette Herz. She passes the summer months in a charming little house in the *Thier-Garten*, where she sees only a few friends, and I can thoroughly enjoy her society. I spend at least one whole day in each week there—with how few people could one do it! But the day always passes delightfully in varied occupations and pleasures. She still teaches me Italian. We are reading Shakespere together, and have been doing something in natural philosophy. We read the best German books, and spend some pleasant hours in walking out and in talking freely on many important subjects. Thus we have had full and undisturbed enjoyment of the early spring. Marcus Herz esteems and loves me, although we are so entirely different. The sisters of Henriette Herz, two amiable girls, are always pleased to see me; even her mother, a severe and irritable woman, has taken a liking for me. . . . Schlegel has confessed himself jealous of the rapidity with which our friendship has grown. He is forced to content himself with my intellect and my philosophy, while to her my whole nature expands itself. The time which I spend with her is not simply relaxation, it adds in many ways to my direct information, develops thought, and spurs my intellect; and in the same way I am of use to her."

Henriette Herz possessed in a remarkable degree the power not only to discern, but quietly to draw out the latent faculties of her friends. Fully conscious of this,

Schleiermacher in one letter addresses her half humorously:— 1799.

"Oh, you all-inspiring, all-fertilizing power! You are a true Ceres to one's inner nature; and yet you persist in thinking so much of the activity of that outer world which is but a medium. In that large, universal machine, wherein so little is really accomplished towards the great end of all action, and so much is positively lost to it, the individual becomes absorbed or paralysed. All this restless toil and effort for material good, in which men wrongly and vainly spend themselves, is it not all a hindrance to our silent work? Who hears us? What does the world dream of our inner nature and its movements? All is to it an unexplored mystery. Look round you, and see what you already have done, are doing, and will yet do. Confess that the quiet progressive culture which you enjoy and diffuse is infinitely more valuable than anything to be gained from that outer chaos which has yet to become order. . . . Let us seek quality in time; we shall find it the best anticipation of quantity. If we can make for ourselves a golden age, is it not as good as though we lived a hundred years?"

The "Monologues" which established the fame of Schleiermacher were mostly written during his solitary life at Potsdam, and on this account are the outgrowth of emotional, as well as of intellectual struggle and effort. In February, 1799, he writes thus to Henriette Herz:—

"Be good to me and write often, to keep up the vigour of my life, which fails utterly in this solitude. I am the

1799. most dependent being on earth, and doubt sometimes whether I am an individual at all! I thrust out every fibre, every leaflet, thirsting for affection, and if I do not find the supply abundant I wither and become dry. It is, once for all, my disposition, and I know not how to cure it if I would. Remind me in your letters constantly of the 'Monologues,' for fear they should come to a sudden stand-still. I will report progress faithfully, but not a word of manuscript shall you have until I can send you the close of the second, for I perceive it is not well to write them in small portions. . . . You see that I am right; composition (*das machen*) is an unnatural effort to me. That is how it is I have of late been so disturbed, and my letters have been so empty, that I should have been quite concerned were it not that you know me so thoroughly well. Either it must become more natural to me, or I shall give it up altogether. It takes too much out of my life, and after all accomplishes nothing for myself, the world, or my friends, which is worth the trouble. You fancy you would never know my thoughts if I did not write, but I think I may safely say there is nothing new to you, and the loss to myself in the composition of the 'Monologues' outweighs any gain which the reading of them may bring to you. . . . All religious men are priests, and all are one. If these two thoughts do not run through the 'Monologues,' then I have undoubtedly missed my aim."

True to this life-long faith, that every good man is a priest of God, Schleiermacher held it as a sacred duty to help all who came under his influence forward in the Divine life. Stagnation, spiritual or intellectual, was more to be dreaded than any physical death. He was always

anxious therefore that Henriette Herz should raise the standard of her effort, and he tried, now by praise and now by blame, to make her conscious of her own gifts and responsibilities. 1799.

"Yet after all," he writes, "you are in doubt about yourself, and so far you are wrong. Are you not as much an individual being as others? Have you not moulded your whole life after your own especial manner? Do you not combine in a remarkable degree much that we find in other people only singly or in modified quantities? Must I count them up for you? Your fidelity to your position, your affectionateness, your unobtrusive learning, your social talent, and all that goes with it; your inexhaustible imitative faculty, to which belong both your power of language and your power to read human nature; and finally your practical genius, which is unresting and universal? How much more am I to upbraid you with your indolence—for in the matter of self-knowledge you are indolent, and for that reason you must write. . . . Make all possible progress in Greek, that you may read Plato's Symposium. I read it again a few days ago, and with increased delight, despite that heretic, Frederick Schlegel, who does not hold it to be Platonic. I laugh heartily at the proof you threaten to give me of your incapacity for writing, by sending me part of your journal. If the journal be genuine it ought to be first-rate. What I wish is, that by writing you should become something more than you are, and unless you already write excellently I cannot give it up. Believe me, and be obedient. But what you write must be as subjective as possible. A re-

1800. presentation of your thoughts and views should be the main thing, although you may begin with the objective by way of practice."

Here, however, Schleiermacher made a great mistake, and we cannot but secretly rejoice that Henriette Herz did not follow the well-meant but dangerous advice. It is precisely in the absence of such self-consciousness that her great charm lies. Had she yielded to the prevailing subjective habit of thought, and indulged in that mental introspection which became the philosophic fashion of the day, it would have been, in her case, to sacrifice individuality, and mar essentially the unique beauty of her character. This culture of the individual came up as a necessary reaction from that cosmopolitanism which characterised Goethe and his contemporaries: which was embodied by the philosopher in phrase so felicitous, and by the statesman in action so disastrous. The younger thinkers, followers of Kant, seized eagerly upon his grand Protestant doctrine of individual right, with its attendant responsibility, and spun out of it intricate theories and delicate fancies, until in Schleiermacher's hands the cultivation of character, the perfecting of every-day life, became not only a moral duty, but an æsthetic delight. In certain minds, however, and especially amongst thoughtful women, these theories led to a morbid introspectiveness as unattractive as it was pernicious. It perhaps reached its climax in Rahel, intensified by her early sorrows, and by her mental necessity to have everything clearly defined. In Rahel, however, genuine humour and true genius are sufficiently counterbalancing ele-

ments, and her character, despite this failing, still con- 1803.
strains our loving admiration.

In 1809 Schleiermacher married the young widow of his friend Von Willich. She was admirably suited to him, and her published letters leave no doubt as to her capacity to satisfy him fully in regard to "subjective" writing.

After the death of Marcus Herz, in 1803, the Frau Hofräthinn Herz found herself dependent upon a very small pension. Their hospitalities, although simple and unostentatious, had absorbed the available professional income. But the houses of her many friends were always open to her. They also endeavoured to find for her some occupation which would relieve her difficulties, exercise her many talents, and serve to solace the lonely hours which were shadowed for her by an increasing sense of her loss. Madame Campan, when visiting Berlin with her son Henri Campan,[1] saw much both of Rahel and of Henriette Herz, and was extremely anxious to take the latter to Paris. There she promised to find abundant scope for her talents, both social and educational, in a family of high rank, but upon the condition of her renouncing Judaism. As a matter of personal belief, Henriette Herz under the influence of Schleiermacher had long since adopted his views of Christianity, but her consideration for her mother, who was a "Hebrew of the Hebrews," prevented her from making any public acknowledgment of the change in her opinions. On this account, therefore, the Paris scheme was abandoned. Subsequently, Henriette Herz undertook to superintend the education in English of the youngest daughter of the Duchess of Courland. Probably the pecuniary advantage alone of this arrangement would

[1] Appendix D.

1803. not have led her to accept the offer, but it promised a fresh opening into very varied society, and society having become to her a necessity, she gladly acquiesced.

The Duchess of Courland was a woman who combined remarkable energy and administrative capacity with attractive manners, intelligence, and unfailing social tact. She gave a peculiar character to the society of her house by her resolute opposition to mere rank as the necessary qualification for admission to that circle. The battle of intellectual equality was fought by the Duchess against the direct and indirect hostility of the Berlin aristocracy, and the influence of her victory was felt in other parts of Germany. Side by side with the most feminine tastes she possessed a political insight and a breadth of judgment which was more than once of important service to her husband in his relations to his dependants, as sovereign Duke of Courland. They spent great part of the year upon their estates, but during the winter resided usually in Berlin. There, from her high rank, the Duchess was able to receive any of the Prussian nobility, while at the same time her intelligent human sympathy led her to welcome on equal terms all who were fitted to fulfil the general requirements of educated society—all who were refined, interesting, or agreeable. At these receptions it was the custom to arrange the supper upon a number of small tables, which were occupied by the company without distinction of rank: thus Frau Hofräthinn Herz, the physician's widow, might sit and talk with democratic ease to the princes and princesses of the royal house.

In addition to the anxieties of the widowhood of Henriette Herz, came the unpleasant incident in connection

with Louis Börne, who had been prosecuting his medical studies under the care of Marcus Herz. The studies, however, appear to have been nominal. The youth had spent his childhood in the seclusion of a quiet Jewish home at Frankfort. Fettered on the one hand by the restrictions of religious observances, and on the other by the wanton tyranny of the Christian government, outward circumstances seem to have combined to stamp out all poetry or pleasure from the boy's life. He was naturally shy and reserved, distinguishing himself only by the number and the nature of the questions with which he tormented his tutor. After a brief stay at the University of Giessen, Börne was removed when seventeen to Berlin, to enjoy the special advantage of scientific training under Dr. Herz. The transition must have been great from the gloom and quiet of the ancestral home in the Judengasse to the lively hospitalities of the Berlin household; like passing from the grey twilight of a crypt out into a garden flushed with the colour and fragrant with the odours of a summer's day. The youth became dazzled, entranced; he made no pretence of study, but from his quiet corner observed and drank in all he saw and heard. On the death of Marcus Herz he begged to be allowed to continue in the house. Henriette Herz, his senior by about twenty years, saw no difficulty in his remaining. After some months, the servant came to her one day at the house of Madame de Lemos, to give her a note which Börne had put into her hands with much agitation. It was addressed to a chemist, and contained ten Friedrichs d'or and an order for arsenic. In much alarm Henriette Herz sent her sister Brenna to the house, to seek some explan- 1804

1805. ation. To her the misanthropic youth confessed that he loved Henriette Herz hopelessly, and his life was a burden. Brenna imagined herself successful in bringing him to reason, and for a time matters went smoothly on. After a while, however, a second attempt of the same kind was discovered, and his hostess felt that some decisive step must be taken. She wrote to Reil, then professor at Halle, and made arrangements for transferring Börne to his care. To Schleiermacher, then also at Halle, she wrote, entreating for Börne his care and oversight. Schleiermacher did his best conscientiously, but could make nothing of him. After a while he wrote in despair, saying, "He is incorrigibly idle: how is one to help a man who does not care to help himself?" Börne, on the other hand, could fully appreciate Schleiermacher, and wrote of him to Henriette Herz, "He teaches Christianity as Socrates might have taught it, had he been a Christian." The rougher life at Halle was more congenial to Börne than the social amenities of Berlin. He entered with zest into university life, and we can imagine him somewhat later, in 1806, joining that demonstrative band of students who marched in their top-boots and brass helmets—"a compromise between Roman warriors and German postillions"—under the very windows of Napoleon, and treated him to a loud "pereat." Such an expression was a keynote to the political teaching of Börne, which has been echoed and re-echoed through the discordant changes rung by German democracy in the unwilling ears of German governments. Kings and emperors were to Louis Börne what bishops were to Sydney Smith.

CHAPTER III.

Where none were sad and few were dull,
And each one said his best,
And beauty was most beautiful,
With vanity at rest.—LORD HOUGHTON.

THE open evening hospitality of the Herz household, charming as it was, and new to the Berlin world, can scarcely be said to have fulfilled the conditions of a *salon*. The guests were too frequently strangers to each other, and the company too often larger than is compatible with the cultivation of friendly intercourse. In the year 1803 it was entirely broken up by the death of Marcus Herz.

By this time the *salon* of Rahel had become an accomplished fact. Her personal friendship formed the abiding link which held together, through many years of disaster and of change, people who met with pleasure, often with eager anticipation. They did not gather together by formal invitation ostensibly to talk, or dance, or listen to music, or to make any sumptuous display; but to enjoy each other's society, and to partake together of any amusement that might arise. They were accustomed to go to Rahel's house in the certainty of finding there some gratifying response either to head or heart.

After the death of her father and the marriage of her sister Rosa, Rahel remained the presiding spirit of the house. Madame Levin took little share in its society, but

Æt. 30. 1801. her son, known as Ludwig Robert, did the part of host when not absorbed in his poetical and dramatic labours.

In the year 1801, Baron Brinckmann entertained a friend from Paris, a certain Count de S——. No visit to Berlin in that day was complete without an introduction to Rahel. The Count had come already provided with one from the daughter of Diderot, Madame Vaudeuil. The Baron was always delighted to take a stranger, and to witness the charmed surprise excited in them by his adored "Sibyl." He was himself a popular guest everywhere in Berlin; an upright, generous man, with all his failings upon the surface. He was remarkable for his enthusiastic friendships and his graceful versatility, rather than for any higher gifts. Ever ready with an epigram, a verse, or a compliment, he fulfilled throughout his persistent bachelorhood his vocation of universal adorer.

Upon a certain evening the young men arranged to go together to Rahel's house in the Jägerstrasse. They went up the stairs, through an ante-chamber, to a large room with its windows facing the wide street: these were draped with white muslin and enlivened by flowering plants. There was a scarcity of furniture, a deficiency of carpet, an entire absence of knickknacks, but abundant space, light, and air. Upon the open pianoforte was Beethoven's newest sonata, and upon a small writing-table, amid a pile of letters, lay the "Musen-Almanach," Tieck's new drama of "Genoveva," and some manuscript poems of Ludwig Robert. A few guests were already there. Baron Brinckmann presented the Count, who delivered to Rahel the message from their common acquaintance, Madame Vaudeuil.

"Mademoiselle Levin," writes the Count de S——, in his diary, "was neither tall nor handsome, but delicately formed, and most agreeable in appearance. An expression of suffering—she had lately recovered from an illness—lent her an additional charm; while her pure and fresh complexion, harmonising with her dark expressive eyes, gave evidence of the vigour which characterised her whole nature. From these eyes a look fell upon me so piercing that I should not have liked to face it with a bad conscience. It was not, however, that I was an object of special interest; the look was simply a passing question, which appeared satisfactorily answered. When I delivered my message from Madame Vaudeuil her whole face brightened up. I was summoned instantly to tell all I knew. Mademoiselle Levin seemed to think much of the lady, and in a few words had said of her and about her so many kind and characteristic things, that I began myself to have quite a different opinion of her, and with hundreds of miles between us, I felt as though I now understood her for the first time." Æt. 30. 1801.

Upon the sofa beside the hostess was seated a lady of great beauty, a Countess Einsiedel, listening with languid interest to the pedantic talk of a gentleman spoken of as the Abbé; in the background stood Frederick Schlegel in conversation with Ludwig Robert. The door opened suddenly, and a laughing, picturesque figure entered, and rapidly took possession of the arm-chair beside Rahel.

"'What is this?' cried Rahel. 'Is there no Maria Stuart? I thought you were——'

"'Only think,' answered the lively lady, 'Mortimer is ill, so Iffland has brought out another piece, in which there

Æt. 30. 1801. is nothing for me to do. I turn it, therefore, to the best account, by coming to spend the evening with you.'

"'This is charming,' said Rahel, 'and best of all you already find here two special admirers, Schlegel and my brother.'"

Baron Brinckmann, in his character of adorer-general, was here about to step forward, when Frederick Schlegel, with the awkwardness peculiar to him, advanced and said in a solemn, confused way, that it was not he, but his brother August Wilhelm, who was the enthusiastic admirer of Madame Unzelmann, and who had already sung her triumphs as "The Elf." At this specimen of *gaucherie* the company received a shock, but the actress with unruffled self-possession replied smilingly, "I know it, I perfectly understand the difference between the two brothers; but if I do not exact more from you than I do from your brother, you need have no anxiety about playing his part for one short evening."

Other visitors now entering, Baron Brinckmann was driven from his vantage ground between Rahel and Madame Unzelmann, and took refuge with Count S—— in a window-niche, where he began to expatiate upon the new arrivals, among whom were Majors Schack and Gualtieri. They were interrupted by Schlegel, who complained indignantly that Madame Unzelmann had no true idea of art.

"'I can make no way with her at all,' he said, 'she does not in the least understand my remarks upon her very best characters, and returned me the most stupid answers.'"

Schack, who had overheard this last sentence, took him up immediately.

"'Oh, you critical gentlemen expect too much! Madame Unzelmann understands art perfectly in her own way: she plays it, and brings it bodily before you, and you yourself admire it. Why should you insist on her expressing it in *your* manner also. To expect that divine woman to—to—reason, is as monstrous as it would be for us to demand that you should act as she does. That would be something worth seeing.' Æt. 30. 1801.

"'Bravo, bravo, Schack!' cried a voice behind him. It was Rahel, who had risen, attracted by the animated talk in the window-niche.

"'Have I done it well, little Sibyl?' asked Schack. 'I had not long to think it over, for, gentlemen, I had but a moment before heard that remark from Mademoiselle Levin's own lips, and I wished to make use of it at once, and see what you could have to say against it.'

"Meanwhile," continues the Count in his diary, "the company had been increased by two or three ladies, about whom Brinckmann at once busied himself. They belonged to the house. One of them undertook to pour out tea; another was introduced to me as the sister-in-law of Mademoiselle Levin, but with whom she seemed to have no intellectual relationship. I was therefore the more struck by the affectionate and careful way in which she was treated by the hostess, and her unimportant remarks turned to the best account. Brinckmann, to whom I observed this as he stopped to speak to me, said it was no wonder, since his admirable friend possessed so much mind herself, that she could dispense with it in others; that she did not demand it of them, and was satisfied with other qualifications; but at the same time she was

Et. 30. 1801. a thorough Oriental in the tenacity with which she held to all family ties, that she was specially attached to this sister-in-law, and passionately fond of her two little girls.

"In a few words he described to me her brothers. The youngest was abroad; of the two present the eldest was a merchant: he was cold and reserved, and did not please me. The second, Ludwig Robert, had an easy bearing, an unconstrained social manner that was very agreeable; his countenance was remarkable, the keen thinker was perceptible under its superficial easy indifference. Both brothers, cool and unimpassioned, contrasted strongly with their sister, whose warm cordiality and noble freedom was observable in her affectionate care for them.

"The talk became very animated, ranging from one person to another, over the most varied topics. I was no longer able to follow or to retain its changing character. They spoke of Fleck, the actor, and regretfully of his illness and approaching death; of Righini, whose operas were then received with great applause; of social matters; of A. W. Schlegel's lectures, which some of the ladies were also attending. I heard the boldest ideas, the acutest thoughts, the most significant criticisms, and the most capricious play of fancy, all linked and suggested by the simple thread of accidental chit-chat. For in outward form the gathering was like any other, without special plan or purpose. Much that passed was inexplicable to me, from my ignorance of persons and the passing incidents of the day. When Frederick Schlegel expressed an opinion, in his painful and awkward fashion, it was always deep and

genuine; the hearer felt at once that no light coin was issued, but precious metal well hammered. When Schack in graceful narrative, or telling piquant strokes, hit off some distinguished character in the social world, or scattered here and there his bright little remarks, he showed his geniality, his breadth, and his wonderful experience of the great world. The lively caprices of Madame Unzelmann made themselves felt throughout the evening. Ludwig Robert and Baron Brinckmann shone eminently as social favourites. Every one was naturally active, without being intrusive, and all seemed equally ready to talk or to listen. Most remarkable of all was Mademoiselle Levin herself. With what easy grace did she seem to rouse, brighten, warm everybody present. Her cheerfulness was irresistible. And what did she not say? I was entirely bewildered, and could no longer distinguish, among her remarkable utterances, what was wit, depth, right principle, genius, or mere eccentricity and caprice. I heard from her phrases of colossal wisdom, true inspirations, which in a simple word or two traversed the air like lightnings and lodged in the heart. About Goethe she said some astonishing things, such as I never heard equalled." Æt. 30. 1801.

Presently a proposition was made that Ludwig Robert should read a few of his poems. The company bore up well on the whole. Many applauded, Schlegel made grimaces, and Rahel did her best to conceal her weariness, but she was no hypocrite, and never could patiently endure reading aloud.

The salutation of "Good-evening, Gentz," directed the attention of Count S—— to a new arrival. "Seldom have I indeed seen," he continues, "so remarkable a com-

Æt. 30. 1801. bination of shyness and temerity as was expressed in the manner of this man. With an uncertain glance he measured every seat and its occupant. As a stranger, I appeared unimportant; others he recognised as friends; but the sight of Schlegel filled him with a secret horror, and he took a seat at the furthest possible distance from him. Between Madame Unzelmann and his patron Schack he opened a conversation, which soon became general. He told how he had been dining with Haugwitz the minister, with ambassadors and generals, who brought all the news from Paris and London. Madame Unzelmann interdicted politics, and asked for such information only as she could enter into.

"'Certainly, my angel,' replied Gentz, with animation; 'it was by no means of politics that we spoke, but of manners, of pleasures, of—is not Gualtieri here?—the wickedness of Paris, of love affairs, and theatres—all charming subjects, are they not?'"

Frederick Schlegel continued to scowl from the background at Gentz, and was heard to murmur such words as, "paid scribbler, miserable enemy of freedom," &c. Rahel, ever observant, tried to distract the attention of the too sensitive Gentz, and she succeeded at length in drawing him into an animated discussion and an eloquent protest, to which all the company listened in delighted silence. This was interrupted by the entrance of Prince Louis Ferdinand. All rose for a moment, but resumed their places and conversation as before. The handsome face of the prince was clouded, and his manner uneasy and preoccupied: he entered at once into conversation with Rahel. He spoke with angry indignation.

against Napoleon, and of the friendly relations still maintained towards him by the Prussian Court; he accused the Emperor of undermining the freedom of Europe. Some one referred to his brother-in-law, the Prince Radziwill, to whom he was strongly attracted by their common love of music. The Prince inquired if he had not already been there. Æt. 30. 1801.

"'No,' was the reply; 'he has probably gone to his hunting-seat.'

"'Gone to hunt! you do not know my brother-in-law,' said the prince, with a smile. 'He hunts of course when he must; he does everything that is correct, but it is all done in a musical sense. For example, he cares nothing for the game, and his love of sport is abundantly gratified by leaning, rifle in hand, against a tree, and singing La caccia! la caccia!'"

When the prince took up his hat to go, the company followed his example. But upon the staircase Prince Radziwill met and brought him back again into the room. Baron Brinckmann and his friend took a turn up and down the street in the soft night air. A window was open in the room they had left, and from it they heard the most exquisite strains of music. It was Prince Louis improvising, as he was wont to do in certain moods. Rahel and Prince Radziwill stood beside the window, listening.

Upon the following morning Count de S—— again appeared in the Jägerstrasse, according to an appointment made with Ludwig Robert. An odd-looking old servant, who had been darting in and out among the grand folks on the previous evening, led him up to the top floor, upon

Æt. 30. 1801. which were Ludwig Robert's private rooms. Finding the door locked, she concluded he was not yet up, and the Count turned to go downstairs. At that moment an opposite door opened and Rahel appeared. She explained that her brother had been detained out until an unusually late hour the night before, but would soon make his appearance; meanwhile she begged the count to wait for him in her room. In this simply furnished room, with its sloping roof and garret window, Rahel sat when she wished to be undisturbed, or to receive a few favoured morning visitors without the interruptions of the more public sitting rooms. From this she gained the sobriquet of the "Sibyl of the Attic."

The distinguished guests of the preceding evening now naturally came under discussion. After talking of Prince Louis and of Gentz, the Count, somewhat incautiously, repeated some remarks which he had heard in disparagement of Baron Brinckmann, and which he had resented.

"But Mademoiselle Levin," he writes, "took his defence into her own hands. 'Faults and failings,' she exclaimed, 'who is without them, and who does not find them out in another when they are well hidden, much more those that lie upon the surface. But, for heaven's sake, do not listen to such things again. Make it once for all a principle of life never to judge a man according to his faults, but by whatever he has that is good and excellent. Search for this, and the more you find, the less you will care about his failings. Common minds do the opposite, and on this account they are common. Look at Brinckmann's active intellect, his frank intelligence, his eagerness, his accomplishments, his unswerving friend-

ships, his hearty geniality, which makes attachment a necessity to him. Consider all that he is, and does, and then look round and see how many you can find who are his equals. Never listen to those empty gossips! The best judges know how to appreciate him. Ask Schleiermacher, ask Frederick Schlegel—who rarely appreciates any one—ask me, for I count myself among them, and you hear what I think of him.' Æt. 30. 1801.

"I became almost envious of such praise," continues Count S——, "yet it was all fair and true. After a few general remarks, I could not help congratulating Mademoiselle Levin upon being the centre of such a gathering as I had seen the evening before. I said she must feel very happy.

"But I would gladly have recalled the words, for I saw that I had touched a tender string, and should have felt my position most painful, but that I soon perceived from the remarks which followed that I was of no personal account: they soon became a kind of soliloquy.

"'How do I stand to all these people?' she exclaimed, sadly. 'I have no personal satisfaction in any of them. They bring me their sorrows, their offences, their troubles, their cares. They come here to be amused, and if they find better entertainment elsewhere, they leave me at once. I amuse them, I listen to them, I help, comfort, advise them. In so far as I do this because it is my nature, I have a personal satisfaction, but they have the whole benefit. I know well that men are weak, submissive, easily led, and I could bind them to me and make them serviceable. But I scorn the constraints of etiquette, the forms of friendship which become the legal titles to such

Æt. 30. 1801. services; services which are to be of no account unless rendered spontaneously, as though straight from heaven. The rest turn my views to account, and consider nothing which they are not forced to consider. The only demands I make are those of social propriety. I have done with any one who infringes upon these. But even among my best friends I stand unarmed, exposed to wounds upon all sides, and without any balsam for the wounds. Shall I say beyond this, that out of all those whom you saw here yesterday, there is only one whom I entirely like—and you were not conscious of his presence.' [1]

"I felt that I was an accidental witness to this outburst, and was too modest to make any reply. The conversation soon returned into ordinary channels. . . . The entrance of Count von der Lippe presently introduced other topics. A further, and almost comical variation occurred, when Gentz unexpectedly burst into the room, and without noticing the two visitors, threw himself upon the sofa, exclaiming excitedly, 'I can bear no more! What weariness! what torture! Writing all night, and since five o'clock those confounded creditors. They persecute me wherever I go; they hunt me to death; there is no rest anywhere. Let me sleep here for half an hour in peace!'

"The eloquent speaker of yesterday, the astute statesman, the powerful writer, appeared to-day in a pitiable condition. He lay already with closed eyes and folded arms, and seemed perfectly able to command the desired internal repose if undisturbed from without. Mademoiselle Levin, with a compassionate smile, silently led us down into another sitting-room, where we were joined by Ludwig Robert.

[1] Appendix E.

"I saw Mademoiselle Levin many other times, and was received with increasing cordiality. Soon, however, I was unfortunately obliged to leave Berlin. I did so with the conviction that I was leaving a person whose equal I should never meet in this world! Æt. 30. 1801.

"And this belief has been verified."

From this abridged outline of a single evening we may see how Rahel's natural social talent was cultivated by frequent, and often trying, exercise. Her guests were not of necessity invited. She never knew what combinations of class or of character would occur in the course of an evening, or what awkward collision of opinions or of interests might suddenly arise. Moreover, the manners of the time were free, and subjects were often started which in a mixed company would require the most dexterous handling, especially as it was a matter of custom to express opinions or inclinations without reserve. The guests, chiefly known to each other, had a common interest in the proclivities or dislikes, the fancies or convictions which were put forth, and often expressed their differences with considerable warmth. Thus Rahel stood in constant need of her two gifts, instant sympathy, entire and unfailing presence of mind. The latter faculty in its broadest sense was that which she possessed in rare degree. We of to-day complain that poco-curantism has taken the zest out of society, but the modern hostess should thankfully remember that her equanimity can no longer be ruffled by anything so ill-bred as an earnest expression of opinion.

One of Rahel's greatest triumphs was over the jealousy of Madame de Staël. In 1803 she spent some time in

Æt. 32. 1803. Berlin, and upon one occasion heard Prince Louis speak of Rahel as a woman who, in any country or any society, must exercise a very remarkable influence.

This appeared to Madame De Staël incredible of any woman out of France. She appealed to Baron Brinckmann. "What do you think," she asked, "of this assumption, that a little Berlin girl should produce an effect in the circles of Paris? You know her very well; do you think she has much esprit?"

"De l'esprit," replied the Baron. "It would not be worth while to discuss the question if she had only esprit; but, believe me, if Greece were living to-day, she would produce an effect in Athens itself. Who would say of Madame de Staël that she had beaucoup d'esprit?"

"Oh, you compare her to me, do you! That is not bad. What has she written?"

"Nothing. Nor will she ever, although she has genius enough to stock twenty ordinary authors."

"But, mon ami, you are mad! That is to say, your are a German, a fanatic in friendship as in philosophy. But I must know this miracle. You will arrange an evening for me with her?"

So the Baron invited all the élite of Berlin: beauties, poets, philosophers. Madame de Staël placed herself on a sofa beside Rahel, and for nearly two hours remained in conversation with her, regardless of every other attraction.

"Je vous fais amende honorable," she said at length to Baron Brinckmann. "You have exaggerated nothing. She is extraordinary. I can only repeat what I have already said a thousand times during my travels, that

Germany is a mine of genius, whose depth and riches are yet unexplored. You are happy indeed in the possession of such a friend. *You will tell me what she says of me!*" Æt. 32. 1803.

"En attendant, madame," replied the Baron, "I will tell you what she said about you long ago, after the first reading of your book, 'Sur les Passions.' 'That is a woman who would have known everything had she been a German. I hope one day she may become so; because, unfortunately, to write philosophically you must know absolutely every subject, in order to understand the philosophy of each.'"

"Ah, mon Dieu," cried Madame de Staël, "how true that is! She is quite right. I was far enough from knowing everything then, but I am improving now."

Then addressing Rahel, she said, "Ecoutez, mademoiselle!- You have a friend here who knows how to appreciate you as you deserve. If I stayed here I believe I should become jealous of your superiority."

"Oh, no, madame," replied Rahel, smiling. "I should come to love you, and that would make me so happy that you could only become envious of my happiness, since there is no one to inspire you with a similar feeling."

Madame de Staël during her stay in Berlin received her friends every Friday evening. Upon these occasions she usually invited three ladies. To invite Rahel would have been dangerous. Among her favourites were the Duchess of Courland, Frau von Berg, and Henriette Herz. Upon the last Friday gathering these ladies were present, and Henriette Herz describes it in her "Memoirs" as one of unusual interest. Prince Louis Ferdinand distinguished himself by a musical improvisation of extraordinary brilliancy, and made himself exceptionally agreeable.

Æt. 32. 1803. "It is true," says Henriette Herz, "he never entirely lost a certain ton de corps de garde, which however was rather peculiar than offensive. On that evening, for example, he expressed himself toward me in a manner that from any one else would have seemed harsh and inconsiderate, but from him was only a genial expression of sympathy. Taking me by the hand, he led me up to the Duchess of Courland. 'Look well at this woman,' he exclaimed, 'she is a woman who has never been loved as she deserved!' What he said was true. For however good my husband had been to me, however much he had done for my intellectual training, however great might be his confidence in me, and the freedom he allowed to embellish my life in every way, he did not understand such a love as I cherished in my heart, and the very expression of it he repelled as childish."

Madame de Staël startled and somewhat wearied the solid Berliners by her rapid superficial observations upon society and philosophy, and did not leave a very pleasant impression. Rahel perhaps understood her best, and liked her personally, although her criticism of her literary work is not always favourable.

CHAPTER IV.

He who makes, waits.—TURKISH PROVERB.

IT was about the year 1803 that Rahel for the first time saw Varnhagen von Ense. He is so associated with the most important years of her life, that it is necessary to give a brief account of his history up to this date. The son of a physician in Düsseldorf,[1] he there spent his boyhood, untormented by lessons; living a free, ideal sort of life in the recesses of a garden overhanging the Rhine; adoring and adored by an only sister, his inseparable companion.

The family however removed to Strasburg, and thence — with some difficulty in those troublous days — to Hamburg, where they finally settled. The border provinces were at that time swarming with French *émigrés*, aristocrats, whose grand airs rendered them hateful to the Germans, and strengthened their growing sympathy with the revolutionary movement.

Destined for the profession of his father, Varnhagen began his medical studies at an early age, attending lectures upon anatomy and physiology before he was fourteen. On the death of his father he was sent to Berlin, where he worked hard and under adverse circumstances at the Pépinière. The sudden failure of supplies from Hamburg, through the bankruptcy of an old family friend, unfortunately brought this arrangement to an

[1] Appendix F.

1801. abrupt conclusion. Adrift in Berlin at sixteen, he at length obtained the post of tutor in a wealthy family named Cohen.

He now found himself a member of an animated social circle, with time for the prosecution of his own studies, and ample opportunity for literary and general culture. There was a constant flow of intelligent visitors at the house, who kept up such intellectual life as Varnhagen enjoyed to the full. His personal friends at that time were not only young men sharing his literary tastes, but amateur writers, who freely compared their poems and essays, giving assistance to each other by criticism and applause. Among them was Chamisso. To him and Varnhagen occurred one day the idea of printing a selection of these poems, after the fashion of the times, as a *Musen-Almanach.* It was published: Chamisso, as the richest of the young authors, no doubt paying dearly for the luxury. The new *Jena Zeitung* assailed, dissected, and condemned it utterly. After the first shock, however, the writers recovered their presence of mind, and took courage from the fact that among the abused was Fichte himself. Varnhagen also received a consolatory letter from F. Schlegel, which somewhat reassured them as to their position. It unfortunately happened, however, that owing to the outbreak of war, Chamisso left Berlin with his regiment, and the next issue of the almanack fell into unskilled hands. The publication was so ill managed that *Das grüne Bachlein* died ignominiously of misprints.

One evening, during his stay with the Cohen family, Varnhagen was reading aloud from Wieland to a small company of listeners, when they were interrupted by the

entrance of a visitor. A slight figure in dark flowing drapery passed up through the company. Varnhagen heard the whispered name, not altogether strange, of Rahel Levin. He observed her animated gesture, her full beaming eye, her musical, genial voice, in which she was exchanging pleasantries with Count Lippe. The rest of the company sank into insignificance; he indited on the spot a poem expressive of his admiration, which, stranger as he was, he sent to Rahel upon the following day. They did not however meet again for two or three years. 1803.

The lively Cohen household was broken up by pecuniary embarrassments, and Varnhagen went as tutor to Hamburg. He afterwards studied for a while at Halle under Schleiermacher, Steffens, Wolf, and Reil. When the university was dispersed in 1806 we find him again in Berlin. He went through the medical course there, though with much dissatisfaction at the purely theoretical teaching of Professor Horn, and he supplemented the lectures by walking the wards of the *Charité*, studying suffering humanity in his own way, and maintaining the advanced opinion that commom sense might be advantageously combined with scientific research. He also became acquainted with the secret working of the *Tugend-Bund*, through Herr von Bardeleben, one of its originators; who, while leading an apparently idle life in the monotonous repose of Charlottenburg, was actively helping to undermine the power of Napoleon, and to keep alive the little altar-flame of patriotism in the surrounding darkness. It does not, however, appear that either Varnhagen or Stein became members of this organisation.

The eagerness with which Varnhagen pursued his

1803. medical and literary studies characterised also his cultivation of the social advantages which were open to him. If we turn to his "Memoirs," we shall find how fully he could appreciate the acquaintance of Henriette Herz and all that it involved. After speaking of some of his young friends, he goes on to say:—

"We met often at the house of Reimar or of Schleiermacher, but we gathered most frequently and gladly in that of Frau Hofräthinn Herz. There we were always sure of easy friendly intercourse and refined intellectual culture. Here we again met with Karl Schede and his sister Wilhelmine, both keenly appreciative of every subject that came up. The study and the practice of foreign languages was a long-established custom with Frau Hofräthinn Herz. It gave to some meetings a defined object, a continuous interest, which died down only when a complete literature was exhausted. Bekker read with her the Greek classics; Schede, Spanish and Old German; in English and Italian she was applied to from all sides as an authority; both Portuguese and Danish she worked up for herself. Besides her knowledge of these languages and literatures, she took that intelligent interest in more abstract subjects which was to be looked for in the friend of Schleiermacher. With her, Harscher found inexhaustible food for his dialectic inquiries, his root-digging propensities; here he could discuss — sometimes cleverly, sometimes with characteristic eccentricity—such practical matters as served to widen his experimental knowledge, and could test his ideal views of life with those of a genuine woman, which he held to be always practical. . .

"Among the many oft-repeated names of long standing friends of the house, were those of the brothers Humboldt and Frau von Humboldt, Frederick Schlegel and his wife, Ludwig Tieck, but perhaps most frequently of all, that of Rahel Levin. She lived in the town, nearer than the rest, and was very intimate with Schleiermacher and Frau Hofräthinn Herz, but accidentally, at the time of which I write, was not often there. I felt a strong desire to know her. Frau Hofräthinn Herz always spoke of her as a person quite by herself—unequalled—before whom she instantly struck sail; only occasionally differing from Rahel's unreserved expression of opinion and from the disregard to appearances which sometimes jarred upon that sense of the fitness of things which distinguished the Frau Hofräthinn. When a woman who is herself so cultivated, learned, and refined, that she appears a living embodiment of a perfect woman, as developed according to Schleiermacher's ethics—when such an one can speak so highly of another, and place her above all comparison, it is something remarkable. We all, Harscher especially, urged Frau Hofräthinn Herz to invite her friend together with us, when he would be prepared beforehand to find the comparison to be in favour of our hostess, and frankly confessed his intention to do so. The visit was arranged. Rahel appeared only for an hour, as she was suffering from fever, and so was scarcely in the right vein to break up the rather prim attitude of the little gathering. Harscher received no notice whatever from her, and when Schleiermacher came in, and with lively eagerness took his place beside her and entered into conversation, all further approach was rendered impossible. We were not a little 1803.

1805. astonished to see Schleiermacher, both in jest and earnest, playing only a second part; indeed, he seemed willingly to accept a subordinate position, and once or twice fell into a discomfited silence, or seemed to have no reply at hand. When the lady left he conducted her to her carriage, and on his return could not cease praising her. But his mood for the rest of the evening spoke more than words in her praise, for he was lively and energetic the whole evening. This was doubly remarkable to us, since we had never before seen him thus play a second part, and it was long since he had appeared in such good spirits.

"Frau Hofräthinn Herz looked in vain for gratitude from Harscher; he was put out that Schleiermacher had received all the benefit, and his continued cheerfulness was a positive irritation to him. He would gladly have run down or utterly ignored Rahel's manifest superiority, which he was capable enough of appreciating had he chosen. For myself, I shared his dissatisfaction, but on entirely different grounds. I longed intensely for a nearer acquaintance with this wonderful being, before whom all others faded, and with whom, in imagination, I already felt myself in more intimate spiritual *rapport* than with them."

Not long after this incident a propitious fate brought Rahel and a lady of Varnhagen's acquaintance face to face with him *unter der Linden*. The opportunity was not to be lost; he walked awhile beside them, and before parting had diplomatically secured a general invitation to Rahel's *salon* in the Jägerstrasse.

Varnhagen very soon availed himself of this long coveted permission. Let us hear his account of the first evening,

which bears date about five years later than that of the Count de S——. 1806.

"The company was extremely lively; each one with all ease and freedom contributed his part; artifice or hypocrisy had no chance of success. The unconstrained cheerfulness of Rahel, her spirit of truth and straightforwardness, reigned supreme. I was permitted with youthful extravagance to excite myself against the French; another to air his theatrical information; the Frenchman received facetious advice concerning his love affairs; while Schack himself listened to the democratic outpourings of Vetter. All went smoothly on; undue seriousness was lightened by wit and pleasantry, which in its turn was followed by sensible conversation, and so all was well balanced and full of animation. The open pianoforte invited to an occasional strain of music—Rahel herself being an accomplished and enthusiastic mistress of the art—and thus perfected the whole. We separated in good time in a mood of elevated thought, which I indulged for some time, out alone in the starlight, while I vainly scanned my past life for the memory of such another evening. My impatience would only allow a few days to elapse before repeating my visit. My confidence grew so rapidly, that I soon felt myself justified in coming every evening. I was eager to follow up these new ideas; to come into closer contact with those original truths and grand conclusions which she opened out more strikingly before me at every step; to enjoy and share those emotions penetrated with intelligence of which I now became aware. Infinitely attractive and fruitful were those early days of

1806. enthusiastic intercourse, to which I brought my richest treasures in exchange, and so far offered scarcely less than I received. I found myself face to face with the phenomenon that Rahel, in the same measure as others seek to misrepresent themselves, strove to reveal her true self. She would speak of her adventures, sorrows, wishes, hopes, though all might be to her disadvantage, though they might appear to her as false and wrong, with the same unconstrained and profound truthfulness as though all were equally flattering and fortunate. This straightforwardness I have never seen equalled in any other human being. . . .

"Rahel gave to every word, however indifferent, a charm of life, a character of truth and originality, which changed the ordinary into the extraordinary. In this way I breathed a new atmosphere, which affected me like poetry, and yet was the reverse of what is commonly so called. It was reality instead of illusion, the actual instead of the seeming.

"In her presence I was fully conscious of having before me a true human being, that glorious creation of God in its purest, most perfect type. Heart and intellect in lively interchange, active life stirring in every fibre, the whole nature a living harmony: everywhere original and naïve utterance of thoughts, grand in their simplicity and wisdom. This nature expressed itself outwardly in word and act, in a manner characteristically prompt and clever. All this was animated and warmed by the purest goodness, by an ever active love of humanity, the tenderest respect for each one's individuality, the liveliest sympathy for the joys and sorrows of those about her."[1]

[1] "Varnhagen von Ense, Denkwürdigkeiten," vol. ii. p. 107.

This broad human sympathy, which found something good or interesting in everybody, did not however always please Varnhagen; still less did the social tolerance which admitted so many other visitors besides himself. An afternoon or evening to which he had looked forward as an intellectual treat prepared for his own special enjoyment, Rahel would with naïve cruelty devote to commonplace people, whom she chose not only to receive, but expected him to assist in entertaining. This love of society, of humanity in any shape, is an essentially French element in her character. It was fostered by frequent intercourse with distinguished Frenchmen whom the emigration, and later the occupation, brought to Berlin. It also, no doubt, gave the impetus to that wonderful conversational power which not only so fitted her for society, but enabled her to produce a revolution in the spoken German of that day. She introduced conversation as an art. Ignorant of the dictum of Talleyrand, people really endeavoured after her example to reveal their thoughts in the most pointed and appropriate language. 1806.

During the winter of 1807–8 Fichte delivered in the Round Hall of the Academy his famous *Reden*. Such fearless patriotism came by slow degrees to inspire all classes in Berlin. It also gave the keynote to a small band of eager young men, once known as the *North Star Band*. They were all friends of Varnhagen and of Rahel, and counted among them Fouqué, Chamisso, Hitzig, and Wilhelm Neumann. Being mostly but amateur writers they can scarcely be said to have influenced greatly the literature of the day. They were, however, upright, vigorous men, whose work had one common patriotic object, and

Æt. 37. 1808. was of that healthy kind which never altogether misses its aim.

Varnhagen's first effort in prose fiction was carried on at this time with his friend Neumann. They had admiringly read together Jean Paul's "Walt and Wult," which, as our readers will remember, contains in alternate chapters the history of two brothers. Under this inspiration, Varnhagen in a moment of enthusiasm dashed off an opening chapter, Neumann carried on the thread, and when it had become hopelessly entangled they called in the professional aid of Fouqué. He dexterously loosened the knot, but at the same time led the characters on into a new labyrinth of incident and there left them. Thus the work progressed, embodying a thousand passing impressions, events, jests, political grumbles, and personal disputes, all interesting to the circle among whom the manuscript was from time to time read aloud. The genius of Neumann appears to have raised some chapters to the dignity of satire. In 1808 the book was published by Reimar under the title, "The Efforts and Hindrances of Karl." Owing to the troubled state of the country, it was not deemed safe that the name of the publisher should appear, or that much should be done in the way of advertisement, so that the success of the work by no means equalled the expectations of the young authors. August Wilhelm Schlegel, then at Geneva with Madame de Staël, received a copy from Varnhagen, and believed him to be the author of the whole book, not discerning, critic though he was, its somewhat clumsy mosaic work. Ten years later, when Neumann and Varnhagen again met in Berlin, they endeavoured to

gather up the broken thread and enter upon a second volume. But both had lived through much in the interval, and if leisure had not failed them, the enthusiasm and the effervescing humour of early youth would assuredly have done so. Æt. 37. 1808.

"In the course of the summer (1808)," writes Varnhagen, "Rahel removed into a country-house at Charlottenburg, where I visited her as frequently as possible. I compressed all my work into the earlier part of the day; my other intercourse I limited more and more, and I did not allow even the deepening twilight to prevent my hurrying over the intervening miles, on foot or otherwise, so that the busiest day might end in most delightful refreshment. The greater solitude in which I found my friend gave to our conversation and to our whole companionship a freer character and richer result. The reposeful shade before the door of the little house in the retired Schloss-strasse, the cool walks in the fragrant garden, along the shore of the Spree, and in the broad roads overhung with trees shading the quiet place—these charms of the neighbourhood, often heightened by the splendour of the moonlight or starlight, are in my memory inseparably interwoven with the loftiest flights of thought, the tenderest strains of lively emotion; while animated differences and discussions prevented the undue preponderance of sentiment.

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"I was then twenty-four years old, Rahel my senior by more than half those years. This circumstance, taken by itself, might seem likely to have driven our lives widely

Æt. 37. 1808. asunder. It was however but an accident—it was essentially of no account. This noble life, so rich in experience both of joy and sorrow, retained all its youthful vigour; not only the powerful intellect which hovered above everyday regions, but the heart, the senses, the whole corporeal being were as though bathed in clear light. She stood a commanding presence between an accomplished past and a hopeful future. A lasting union was however at that time denied us. Nevertheless military service, journeys, brilliant social distractions, the temptations of ambition and of inclination, the misunderstandings to which the tedious separation gave rise, all left untouched the tie that bound me to Rahel, and could not for a moment shake my belief that I had found the happiness of my life, or slacken my continued efforts to attain its realisation."

Impatient of the scientific deficiencies of Berlin, Varnhagen left it for Tübingen, where, in company with his friend Harscher, he further prosecuted his medical studies. But to each of them the place seemed like a living sepulchre after the social sunshine they had left. The opportunities for work also proved disappointing. Varnhagen became depressed, and his despondency was not cheered by his intimacy with Justinus Kerner, who persecuted him with ghost stories and spiritual manifestations. Even Rahel's letters were not always consolations at this time, as she suffered much herself, and concealed nothing.

TO VARNHAGEN, IN TÜBINGEN.

Thursday, October 27, 1808.

Now it is true; now it has really come, that terrible time which I would not even dread. How I struggled not

to love you, and that was right. I would not again bow my neck to the pain of loss, but perhaps it was nobler after all to let the heart have its way. Happiness, however, remains as usual, beyond reach. What might not life be with you! but, as it is, we steer, and steer, and know not whither. . . . Æt. 37. 1808.

How alone I have been, without even one friend. In the first days of our acquaintance you asked me what I understood by a friend. When I had finished, you said it was what the ancients called friendship, it was friendship after the antique, and I animated the airy pictures myself. A Roland, a Don Quixote is not truer than I am. You must fill in my letters from this recollection, and from the knowledge that you have of me. I cannot express it. All that is most worth utterance, that is, the growth of sorrowful experience, can only utter itself in happiness, in joy, or in death. I have always said, or rather, never said but always felt, that sorrow is shamefaced. . . .

I thought Jean Paul knew but little of me, and that the little was bad. The last time I wrote to him was about the women he puts into his books; I asked for something different. I thought he was hurt, and set me down as foolish and conceited. But he is wholly good. What a description you give of him—and so he has grown stout? How much his opinions fluctuate is clear from his "Æsthetics" and his "Levana"—bad books. He is afraid and overawed by opinions which are at all startling or rousing; and as the latest ones are of this kind, he submits like a timid child, out of amiability. His work, moreover, is so spider-like, every fresh bit of prey is worked into the nearest web. Thus the modern "sensibility" half

Æt. 37. 1808. terrifies him by its boldness and its tendency to Catholicism, but he creeps hesitatingly up behind it nevertheless. If a man is to remain original he must keep to himself; gifted as he is, he should not receive all and everything with open arms. His "Dream of a Madman" is exquisite and genuine. From it you may judge what he is when left to himself. Acquaintance with other writers, even with their books, or worse still, with their critiques, is fatal to him. How has he come to speak of me as humorous? I think I never said anything of the kind in his presence. Perhaps it is because I do thoroughly enjoy and enter into the comic element in his writings, and he knows it.

About his own studies, Rahel writes thus to Varnhagen, in December of the same year:—

"Above all you must have freedom—freedom of heart. Give yourself entirely up to your study or composition while you are at it; do not think of a friend, a model, not even of a great master, unless to avoid him; forget the public, forget everything else in fact. Follow your innermost, your noblest impulse; represent yourself, all that you see, just as it appears to you. Whatever you find to be most lovely, or painful, or fearful, most fascinating or mysterious, pour it out with your felicitous words. How is it that you can express to me so wonderfully, with picturesque incisive words, your growing thoughts, your changeful conflicting emotions? If you handle the world and the public in the same way I am convinced all will go well. You have such a perception of your own nature, and are withal so straightforward, that it must give a certain originality to the power you put forth. . . . I must

counsel you, dear friend, to be truly yourself; work with a kind of *abandon*, as though you were alone in the world, or at least as though you wrote in a language of your own, and must wait the coming of others who might speak it with you. How shall I make my meaning clear?" Æt. 37. 1808.

Here is an outdoor picture a few days later.

Saturday, December 9, 1808.

To-day, just now, our troops are entering. Three hundred officers dine in the *Komödiensaal:* moreover there is to be a free performance to-night—Harlequin and a common-place piece. The whole town, except myself, has gone to see them. I cannot control my bitter, frequent tears of pain and chagrin. I had no idea how strongly I loved my country! I dare not go out; the sight of a Prussian hussar upsets me entirely. I was unspeakably pained this week to meet in the street a Prussian military man, after whom the people stared and the boys ran, and to be unable to make out whether he was an officer, a non-commissioner, or a private soldier. Perhaps you can hardly understand all this implies to a Berliner born in the time of Frederick the Second. As an Englishman knows all about parliament, the Frenchman about etiquette, the Swiss about peaks and glaciers, so the silliest girl in Berlin can unconsciously distinguish the grade of a uniform or the imperfection of a march. I saw the man was a Prussian, but could make out nothing more. I entreat you not to write me a word about politics. My head aches and throbs as I think over the course of public affairs; there is a sense of grim amusement, however, in watch-

ing the follies of these corpse-like figures, all destined to be overthrown before great coming events.

How lovely my long broad street looks at this moment, covered with snow under brilliant sunshine, and traversed by streams of people coming from the soldiers. A whole mile from the Bernauer Gate they have come. I did not think there were so many coaches, or ladies, or fur cloaks in all the world! I have just now seen one troop go by; they looked well. Like Frenchmen, very well, and as though they had seen some service. . . .

CHAPTER V.

Les peuples existent malgré les gouvernements.—MIRABEAU.

IF we call to mind the political condition of Germany during the earliest years of this century, we shall not be surprised that Rahel and the more thoughtful people in Berlin were occupied mainly by literary matters.

For one or two hundred years the turbulent vitality of the old empire had been gradually dying out under the pressure of officialism, royal, courtly, and municipal. To the battles between Ulrich of Wirtemberg and the Swabian League, succeeded those memorable ones of the Regensburger Diet, as to which of its members should occupy the green chairs and which the red. At length, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the people had become quiescent victims to royal incapacity and diplomatic imbecility. No man any longer imagined that his existence or his work could in any way affect the state. The mass of the German nation in fact concerned itself only with the daily labour which provided the daily black bread and sausage, or veal and sauer-kraut. It worked and ate and slept. On holidays it took its pleasure along the sandy roads to Potsdam, Charlottenburg, and other places, listening to the military band (German or French), and drinking *weissbier*. It cared as little for outwitted ministers or defeated troops as it did about the queen's

1800–10. diamonds or the newest system of philosophy. The only demonstration of opinion concerning the French invasion was that evinced after the return of Haugwitz from his visit to Napoleon at Vienna, when all the windows of his house were broken. Hardenberg, on the other hand, who favoured war, and was forced to resign his office in consequence of the temporising policy of the government, received a military serenade every night until he left Berlin. These expressions were, however, not so much popular as military and aristocratic, owing their origin most probably to the enthusiasm of Prince Louis Ferdinand.

This unsatisfactory position of public affairs, in which nothing seemed certain but disgrace, drove the men and women of that day to the solace of literature and to the stimulus of intellectual intercourse. When we dip into those voluminous letters which have come down to us, we are apt to throw them quickly aside as intolerably sentimental and conceited. We, of to-day, do not readily understand the zest with which they entered into and promoted each other's pursuits. In the onward hurry of modern life friendship dies out, and society comes to be valued less as a source of enjoyment than as a means of advancement. We should remember the comparative lightness of their conventional yoke and the abundant leisure which was at their disposal. Their daily necessities were few, and their habits, whether at home or in society, were of enviable simplicity. Frau Levin, Henriette Herz, Schleiermacher and his sister, the hospitable Reimar family, and others would have their rooms and balconies filled to overflowing with evening

guests, not only independent of the adjuncts of ices and champagne, but grateful if the supply of tea and bread and butter proved adequate to the demand. All suffered under the same straitened means, and none were ashamed of a poverty forced upon them from without. We ought also to remember the limitations of the literature which they possessed, the possible advantage of not having too many books to read. They were constrained to think for themselves, to understand for themselves, to criticise for themselves. The periodical literature of the day was especially scanty, was mostly in the hands of a few well-known critics, and was liable to suppression at any moment. They could not, therefore, receive with their morning coffee and hot roll a political and literary creed ready made, fresh from the printing press. Men and women were forced to work out for themselves problems of all kinds. The fact that they were politically bound hand and foot, gave greater intensity to their interest in other questions, social, sophistical, and sentimental. Denied all freedom in public affairs, they sought it in their conventional relations. Forbidden to allow their life to expand in its natural vigour, thrusting out branch and fruit into the wind and sunshine, they endeavoured within the appointed glass-house limits to trim and train it only to bear perfect flowers; and as plants will do when reared under a blue glass, not a few of them outgrew their strength. 1800–10.

The time was one of confusedly stirring ideas, which everybody, eager for novelty, at once seized upon and criticised, each one expecting great things of his neighbour as well as of himself. This naturally led to great glorifica-

1800–10. tion of the individual, often of the common-place. It fostered self-scrutiny and self-worship to a degree which would have been entirely mischievous but for the counterbalancing element of actual literary work. This saved them from sinking into a "Mutual Admiration Society." Both men and women followed out studies in language or literature, science or poetry, from genuine love of such pursuits. Varnhagen and his young fellow-students studied with a definite end, either medicine or theology as the case might be, but they also did a good deal of less systematic work, from an eager desire for knowledge and self-culture. The modern idea of "getting on" in life, as the main incentive to work of any kind, was as yet undeveloped. A student could then afford sometimes to stop by the dusty roadside to gather a flower or to enjoy the outlook across the valley into the distant horizon. Varnhagen did not write his immature romance to bring his name before the public, nor did Schleiermacher follow the inspiration of a remotely anticipated bishopric when he persevered at his "Monologues" in the discouraging isolation of Potsdam. They sought out truth and beauty in all directions diligently, they made them known readily, and above all they admired heartily.

From the redundant correspondence of the period, we may gather that, with the intellectual sympathy and real friendship, there was a considerable admixture of mere sentiment and undeniable flirtation. With so imperfect a balance of mental equilibrium, the result of their cramped condition, they were in danger of running into extremes at all points. It can be no matter for surprise if an adventurous few, bent upon solving, in a lifetime,

the knotty problems of centuries, should have made ship- 1800-10.
wreck among the abounding rocks and quicksands.

After all, when we have satisfactorily censured the society which Rahel and Henriette Herz so enjoyed and adorned, we cannot but see two points in which it may well deserve our envy. The individuality of personal character, which must have given a varied charm to social intercourse such as we can never hope to know; and the keen relish for intellectual enjoyment, which is becoming less and less compatible with our own condition of material prosperity. Sumptuousness and care are a poor exchange for simplicity, with her handmaid, cheerfulness. And the few thoughts which we work out for ourselves are of infinitely more value than the many we receive at second hand. Just as the iron work of Peter Vischer is above those productions of machine manufacture which pass for works of art; as the Sebaldus shrine is above the Skidmore screen; the modern advantage of having our opinions decided, our plain sewing and our fine art perfected for us, is perhaps not altogether beyond question.

Even before the peace of Tilsit, the burden of national disaster and disgrace had become intolerable. The thinkers at length broke silence. Patriotic men uttered their indignation, each in his own way. Steffens, in burning words to the students at Halle; Jean Paul in his "Morning Gleams" from the sunny repose of his garden at Baireuth; Schleiermacher, in his "Discourses;" Arndt, in self-sacrificing effort and in lyrical enthusiasm; and above all, the genius and patriotism of Fichte kindled a sympathetic fire in the hearts of all classes, when in the winter of 1807-8, within sound of the French drums, in

1800–10. daily peril of liberty and life, he delivered his famous *Reden an die Deutsche Nation.*

Even in down-trodden Hamburg an effort was made by Perthes to rouse and sustain the patriotic spirit with which he so fully sympathised. His project was to start a journal, which should concentrate the thought and effort of intellectual patriots. It was to be called the "National Museum," but the first number did not appear until 1810. Associated with it were, Feuerbach, Rumohr, the Schlegels, Eichhorn, Stolberg, Arndt, Fouqué, Görres, Steffens, Grimm, and others. Goethe, in answer to an appeal for interest and help, characteristically replied, "I must, though reluctantly, decline to take part in so well-meant an institution."

In Halle, the students, roused by the eloquence of Steffens, had lifted their voice against the French conqueror. Napoleon, who hated thought as he hated freedom, at once broke up the university. It was but a handful of impetuous young men who were thus dispersed throughout the country; but, like sparks among the summer brushwood, they kindled everywhere little flames, which at length became a widespread conflagration. That awakening patriotism and growing spirit of resistance which Napoleon sought to stifle in the class-rooms of Halle faced him seven years later in consolidated form upon the field of Leipsic. Thus, Steffens, Schleiermacher, Varnhagen, and others, came full of enthusiasm from Halle, to find in Berlin only apathy.

The King of Prussia, after trimming between the French and Russian Emperors, until neither believed in him, was constrained to leave Berlin and join his army.

Next followed the garrison, of whose exodus Henriette 1800–1
Herz wrote years afterwards, in her pleasantest vein of reminiscence. Let us look at one of her graphic pictures of those details which go to make the groundwork of history.

"Of the bravery of the army, men as well as officers, none of us had any doubt, but the character of some of the leaders filled us with the gravest apprehensions. What men they were to be placed in opposition to the great unconquered soldier of the day, with his veteran and enthusiastic generals.

"There was the Duke of Brunswick at seventy-two, who might well have rested in his happy escape thirteen years before, and not again have imperilled the military glory of his youth. There was Field-Marshal Möllendorf, his senior by ten years, a man whom we met daily, and could study at our leisure. We used to see the handsome old man, with his kindly face and lingering traces of feminine beauty, sitting in his dressing-gown and skull-cap at the first-floor window of the Government House. He would either be enjoying the spring rose-buds as they put forth inside the railing in front of the house, or watching the jubilant school children as they trooped by from school morning and afternoon. He was one of those men of whom, in spite of his high position, people never talked. I remember to have heard only one characteristic story about him. He was extremely careful as to the details of his housekeeping. One day, in the absence of his cook, he was greatly elated at buying a fat capon at a very low price: he bought it at the door from one of those men

1800–10. from other parts of the country who served in the Prussian army, and were allowed to do a little business of this kind on their own account. The field-marshal remonstrated with the cook on his return about the high prices he was content to give for such articles, and was confronted by the fact that this identical capon had been stolen from his own poultry yard!

"This comfortable old gentleman, this careful housekeeper, who, apart from the antiquity of his military experience, was fit only to be the subject of one of Voss's idylls, could not but present the most painful contrast to that successful and vigorous commander whom we saw in all the print shops in Berlin, as he dashed, standard in hand, across the bridge of Arcole and seized the victory. . . . . But we did not yet despair, a nimbus still surrounded the phrase, 'The Prussian Army.' We still possessed the 'Star of Prussia,' before which that of Bonaparte was to fade away. The most thoughtful among us tried to stave off their almost intolerable presentiment of evil; dreading to entertain those worst fears, which they knew to be well grounded, in spite of cheerful phrases. Their only comfort was, *Il y a un dieu des ivrognes.*

"But what availed all self-deception, all narcotics? The hurtling thunder of Saalfeld scared even the most confident. The first engagement a defeat, and a defeat accompanied by the death of so well known and remarkable a man as Prince Louis Ferdinand. No time was left us to cherish our grief; reports came in quick succession from the seat of war.

"The next report, it is true, was incorrect. Soult, it

said, was beaten, and his whole corps made prisoners. 1800-10.
This announcement was made to the public by a placard upon the ground-floor of one of the ministers' houses in the Behren-Strasse, I think that of Haugwitz. Had it been well founded its importance would have been incalculable. But no joyful excitement was perceptible among the people. After the first hour there was no crowd collected to decipher the writing upon the absurd little placard. Several hours later in the day I went myself to the house, in order to allay my doubts. I found only one person there, and he was the porter, who paced gloomily up and down in front. Had the Prussian nation become stupefied, or had it ceased altogether to exist? . . .

"But the terrible news of the next day put an end to all conjecture. No one disputed the truth of this new announcement, which was remarkable enough. It has often been incorrectly repeated, but I think I remember perfectly each word: they seemed to burn into my soul.

"'The king has lost a battle. Quiet is the first duty of the citizen. I require it from the inhabitants of Berlin. The king and his brother live.'

"How laconic and how superfluous. Who was there in Berlin who thought of disturbing its 'quiet'? This placard also was read. Upon a few faces it raised an expression of fear, but the majority remained unmoved, or passed on with a shake of the head, which implied that things were going on too fast. These Berliners, who were thus exhorted to maintain 'quiet,' were so childishly peaceful in their disposition, that when the peace-preaching general was leaving the town a day or two after, at the head of his last handful of troops,

1800–10. they surrounded him, begging him not to forsake them.

"'I shall leave my children here,' replied the warrior.

"The people were somewhat taken aback. No one knew who these 'children' were. Some thought it a mysterious expression, concealing some hidden palladium. He referred, however, only to the Princess Hatzfeld and her husband, the former an intimate friend of mine, who was not a little surprised to hear that she was left behind as a pledge for the safety of Berlin.

"This was the last deed of the last general who for many years left Berlin at the head of his troops. His first was perhaps not more heroic. He had become general of the infantry, as he had also become head of the bank and of marine affairs, general postmaster, privy councillor, cabinet minister, curator or president of the academy; and had united in his person all these heterogeneous offices and dignities, because for years it had been an established rule that every vacant and remunerative office should be conferred upon the Count von Schulenberg-Rehnert. When the mother of King Frederick William III. died at Montbijou, two worthy citizens met outside the palace.

"'Do you know the Queen Dowager is dead?' asked one.

"'Ei! Then who is to be Queen Dowager now?' replied the other.

"'Who is to be? Why Schulenberg, of course,' was the answer. . . .

"The day upon which the French troops entered Berlin was in keeping with its predecessors. The win-

dows were filled with curious spectators, as though upon some rarely festive occasion. But of that character the entry certainly had nothing, and it was this fact perhaps which roused the first emotion in these eventful days. The troops streamed along in the worst possible discipline according to Prussian ideas; little fellows in grey cloaks, talking noisily together, riding three on one horse, and *pour comble d'horreur* upon their three-cornered hats, in close proximity to those tricolours which had figured victoriously in two hemispheres, was stuck a leaden spoon ready for instant service. Nothing thaws a crowd like a good joke, and the Berliners had no sooner apostrophised them as 'Spoon Guards' than they began to look more lively; indeed, they almost felt as though they were victorious over the victors. Only now and then a sad face appeared. It was sure to belong to some half-pay Prussian officer, who shook his grey head, unable to comprehend how such undisciplined hordes could conquer the Prussian soldier, with his immaculate uniform, his unexampled drill." 1800–10.

For two years the French soldiers were quartered in Berlin, and not only the purses but the wits of the German housewives were sorely exhausted in providing for them. In the matter of wine a notorious compound was achieved, which was known long afterwards as "quartering wine." A few economical mothers consoled themselves with the reflection that their daughters were getting for nothing "first-rate French conversation lessons."

When at length a peace was patched together and the French evacuated Berlin, its inhabitants had been two

1800–10. years without sight of a Prussian uniform. The most insignificant individual bearing that symbol of authority would have been made welcome. But when, upon the 10th of December, 1808, the first troops who appeared were the "Schill Battalion," headed by the already famous Major Schill, their enthusiasm knew no bounds. This young officer, of Hungarian descent, was known to have fought bravely at Auerstadt, fallen into the hands of the French, escaped from them, and made his way to Kolberg, a small fortress in Pomerania. There the ruling authority was Colonel Lucadou, a conscientious official of the old school, firm in his belief in red tape generally, and in his own position as a kind of Providence to the lesser order of beings who wore no uniforms. In fact, one of those consequential dummies who had become a curse to the Prussian army, and against whom for years past Scharnhorst had been slowly working. Lieutenant Schill saw that the garrison alone was unequal to the defence of the town: he stirred up the patriotism of the citizens, and, with the help of a brave ship's captain, Knettlebeck, put the outworks into a tenable condition. He dashed out with his little troop upon the convoys of the enemy, harassed them in many directions, and once or twice inflicted upon them serious losses, all in despite of one arrest and many angry oaths from the helpless colonel. Thus for several weeks Schill held Kolberg, until Gneisenau came to take the command. Then experience, ardour, and untiring vigilance kept up the defence until July, 1807, when news of peace came, and Kolberg was the only Prussian fortress which had not capitulated.

"Let all the world believe," said Gneisenau generously, 1800-10.
"that it was Schill alone who defended Kolberg. The state will be so much the better for it. He is young, and can render important service to the great German cause through his popularity and his widely spreading fame: we must give all glory to such men." The king made Schill major of a regiment of hussars, allowing his little troop of infantry, which had seen such brilliant service under him, to bear the title of the "Schill Battalion," and appointing for them the distinction of first entering Berlin. All through the towns and villages they made one triumphal march; while in the city itself, shouting crowds, triumphal arches, wreaths of flowers, jubilant music, balls, and free theatres awaited them.

"These people make too much of me," said Schill, naïvely. The clouds of incense oppressed him. But he seemed made to be a popular hero, and every tale of his daring deeds fitted rightly to that simple outspoken man, with those agile limbs, those fine features, and those wonderful brown eyes. Schill was now thirty-six, and the most popular man in Prussia — idolised by the soldiers, distinguished by the king, and holding a position of which Scharnhorst thus wrote to him:—

"You are in a fine position, and the time is at hand in which we must be able to reckon upon powerful action. You must have an eye to the state of affairs in Austria: in this year (1809) probably war will break out there, perhaps even in the spring. We must then be ready at all points, and upon you I count most of all. It would be well if you could get possession of Magdeburg, and

1800–10. rouse central Germany. You will find no lack of sympathy among the inhabitants. But you must wait for the signal, and precipitate nothing."

We all know how prophetic these words proved, how through the failure of the Dörnberg attempt Schill's complicity in it was discovered. He was in communication with the *Tugend-Bund* and other secret organisations, which in spite of the precautions of Napoleon were active throughout the country. Finding his plans thus abruptly disclosed, Schill marched his six hundred men out of Berlin, addressed them in enthusiastic words, and led them on towards Magdeburg. Hundreds of young men followed him from Berlin, among them a friend of Rahel and Varnhagen, Alexander von Marwitz, a young man of ardent patriotism and rare intellectual promise.

But Schill's plans, when he found himself thus forced into action, were only half developed, and the country by no means ripe for the movement. He was defeated at Magdeburg, was unable to join Dörnberg, and was further dismayed by the intelligence of a defeat in Austria. Perplexed and discouraged, Schill lost some precious days, unable to come to any decision. At length he made for Stralsund, having first communicated with the English admiral in the Baltic. He reached Stralsund on the 25th of May, just as the gunners were firing a salute in honour of Napoleon's entry into Vienna. With his handful of followers he took possession of the town, where they found ample store of food and ammunition. A price of 10,000 francs was set upon the head of *ce brigand Schill*, and the Dutch and Westphalian troops were coming up

behind; but in front was the Island of Rügen, the open sea, and the English cruisers, who surely would arrive in time to show their teeth to the Dutchmen. But day after day the forlorn little garrison looked out to sea for the help which did not come. On the 31st of May Gratien came up, fired into the half-open breaches of Stralsund, climbed the ramparts, took the twenty rusty old guns, and drove the garrison inch by inch into the streets. There, in a hand-to-hand fight, Schill fell, instantly killed. On the same evening, when all was lost, the English cruisers slowly hove in sight. It was not known where Schill's body was buried, and in the popular fancy he long survived, rescued from Stralsund, and waiting to lead on his country to a terrible retribution.[1] 1800-10.

Schill was, perhaps, an idealist, but he stands out an heroic figure when all heroism seemed dead. He woke up the soul of the liberation movement. He was the beating heart, Scharnhorst the working hand: both were pioneers, not of 1813 only, but of 1870. They died in harness, neither saw the promised land of freedom for which they had yearned and laboured.

Among those few, scarcely two hundred, who escaped the slaughter of Stralsund and the savage vengeance of the French authorities, was the young volunteer Alexander von Marwitz. When he reached Berlin he was forced to conceal himself most carefully, sleeping each night in a different house, or bivouacking under the spring foliage and spring rains of the Thier-Garten, then a suburban region untroubled by police. He contrived to let Rahel know of his escape. She communicated with Varnhagen,

[1] Appendix G.

1800–10. who had just returned from Tübingen. The friends met often, and discussed with chafing restlessness the desperate condition of the country, the impossibility of remaining still, and the hopelessness of action.

With the repulse of Napoleon at Aspern, however, hope again revived. Varnhagen at once decided to join the Austrian army as a volunteer. He started in company with Von Marwitz, and together they shared the fatigue, the hope, the disappointment of the long and hard-fought battle of Wagram. Just before its close, upon the 6th of July, Varnhagen was wounded, and carried by a comrade from the field. Then, with other sufferers, he was conveyed away in a jolting country cart under the burning sun, which raised large blisters upon his neck as he lay, until some compassionate hand threw over him a large bough off a linden tree. Arrived at the village of Zistersdorf, he passed there the weary weeks of convalescence. By the friendly aid of crutches he was at length enabled to find his way down to the little flower garden below the house; to visit and study the notabilities of the village—the *Amtmann*, or squire, the pastor, the Franciscan monk who envied the pastor, and the gentle lady who visited the wounded and left them fragrant flowers.

This little idyll was somewhat rudely broken in upon by the arrival of French troopers, who stayed some weeks in the house, and insisted upon taking Varnhagen to Vienna as prisoner of war. Upon his arrival there Varnhagen at once applied to the military authorities, representing that he had been brought from Zistersdorf at the caprice of a French colonel after the peace negotiations had already been set on foot. The official shrugged his shoulders, and

said there was nothing to be done but to wait in Vienna until the exchange of prisoners was arranged. Varnhagen was permitted to retain his sword, at that time his only possession, his baggage having remained with the regiment since the battle of Wagram. The faded uniform which he continued to wear, not in patriotic defiance, but from sheer necessity, won for him an enthusiastic reception in many a true Austrian house: from those of Arnstein, Eskeles, and Pereira he received especial kindness. After the lapse of many weeks an intimation came to him that he was at liberty to rejoin his regiment, then stationed near Presburg. 1800–10.

Here Varnhagen passed dreary days and weeks in a small hut crowded with officers, who had no thought beyond card-playing and smoking. The camp was unhealthy, sickness carried off the feeble and depressed the strong. The regiment of his friend Von Marwitz at length came into the neighbourhood, and they eagerly sought each other's society and sympathy. They felt alike the dread of a disgraceful peace and the impossibility of continuing the war; they talked of their Berlin friends, and especially of Rahel. For her Marwitz entertained a strong chivalrous kind of worship, which he made no effort to conceal, only yielding up the prize to Varnhagen as to an acknowledged superior. When, after tedious weeks of waiting, a letter from Rahel, dated months before, was handed to Varnhagen, he shared the closely covered sheets with Marwitz as a common property.

Often did they discuss together the short campaign and the sudden collapse of the Austrian army. The troops which had fought against unequal numbers with such

1800-10. persistent energy through August and September were now reduced by one half. The publication of a list of 90,000 sick and wounded, and the sight of suffering and mismanagement on all hands, forced upon Varnhagen the bitter conclusion that peace was an absolute necessity. Hundreds of poor sufferers were daily exposed to the October wet and cold in the streets and courtyards; hundreds more were placed on board ships going further up the Danube, there to die from inanition or miasma; while others, still more unfortunate, "left hope behind" as they entered the military hospitals, where typhus and misrule proved more fatal than the bayonets of the enemy.

Among the many victims of the unhealthy camp was Count Bentheim, the colonel of Varnhagen's regiment. Dissatisfied with the treatment of the staff-surgeon, he insisted that Varnhagen's advice should be followed, and that he should remain in constant attendance upon him. With such a breach of etiquette upon his conscience, it is surprising that the count recovered. He did so, nevertheless, thereby defeating the dreary prophecies of the discomfited staff-surgeon. But the fact that an officer of rank should have been attended and cured by a man who possessed no title, civil, military, or medical, was a conventional sin which nothing could condone. Varnhagen was not sorry therefore to leave the neighbourhood where etiquette or miasma might any day prove fatal, and to accompany Count Bentheim to Vienna, and thence to Paris, on family affairs.

Varnhagen remained in Paris during the summer of 1810, which it will be remembered was marked in the Parisian world by a series of costly demonstrations in

honour of Napoleon's marriage with the Archduchess Marie Louise. The triumphs of the upholsterers and firework makers reached their climax on the occasion of that fête at the Austrian Embassy, which has become historic from its tragical termination. Varnhagen was present when the imperial pair passed through the saloons to the sounds of triumphant music, the emperor glancing grimly round him. Later in the evening he saw by the lurid light of flames a surging crowd of terrified human beings driven hither and thither by the advancing fire; and in the grey dawn discovered with Dr. Gall, under the charred ruins, an unrecognisable human form, which the uninjured jewels proved to be that of the Austrian ambassadress. 1800–10

The frequent opportunities now offered to Varnhagen of studying the French emperor contributed to intensify his old feelings of animosity. In spite of all that was dazzling in the imperial court life, in spite of visits to the Louvre, to Madame de Staël at Chaumont, and to the intellectual Henriette Mendelssohn, Varnhagen found himself tormented by genuine German home sickness. He therefore gladly returned with his friend Count Bentheim to a family estate in Westphalia; while the reigning count remained behind in Paris, hoping vainly to obtain from Napoleon the restitution of his territorial and princely rights, and clinging to every relic of his vanishing royalty, down to the red shoe rosettes which called forth such sarcastic remarks at his morning promenades.

In his "Memoirs" Varnhagen gives a charming account of the life in the family château at Steinfurt; of the odd mixture of court etiquette and farm-house freedom; of the French espionage which abstracted his papers and

1800–10. reported him to head-quarters, and of the friendly but futile warning which he received from an old French officer "not to write so many letters." He continued, however, to indite, and also to receive them. Most of those from Rahel at this time to Varnhagen are enigmatical to us, from our utter ignorance of the difficulties, troubles, misunderstandings, and mischief-makings to which they often allude.[1] Public affairs are purposely avoided. Here we have a sketch of her first introduction to Frau von Fouqué.

"In my unhappiness yesterday I forgot to mention that Frau von Fouqué had been with me the day before. *De but en blanc;* most amiable; she brought her son with her. I found her charming. Hanna brought her to me; Marwitz also was here; we all breakfasted together. As soon as she entered the room, both of us, and therefore the whole company, were as though we had known each other for fifty years. She is a *femme consommée*, and I observed in her the 'thirty charms,' and many other gifts. Marwitz knows her; she treats him admirably, and also Hanna, but her behaviour to her son is surpassingly good. There is a delightful sense of freedom about her, not a trace of that pride of which people accuse her; still Hanna says she is not quite the same here as at home. Marwitz also likes her. To-day she has returned home, and I must write to Fouqué and congratulate him. Her eyes are lovely when raised, as they often are in animated talk. It was unceremonious of her to come, for Fouqué has never mentioned her to me in his letters.

[1] Appendix H.

"How odd it is with me! Generally it is the authors who are visited, but now the writers seek me—a poor miserable reader! Really I believe I understand the art of silence with the pen as a few clever people do with the mouth. 1800–10.

* * * * * *

"This very moment, dear friend, have I received your letter. And first I must speak of Steffens, whom I never saw, but I have always felt attracted towards him. Do not be surprised when I tell you I have read his essay upon the universities, and now—do not laugh—am reading his geognostico-geological essays, as a preparation for a study of the inner history of the earth. I took them away from Humboldt. To him history and nature are one, and thus only do I care to have them treated; thus do I think, unlearned as I am, and know that I understand him. But I cannot write more about him, because I did so at once enthusiastically to Marwitz, and you know me. . . .

"The university (of Berlin), if it remain only a beginning, is a grand thing; it wins upon the people in all directions; it is an intellectual result. It has sprung up under humiliation, poverty, fear, disorder. May Phœbus send only quickening beams upon this spontaneous life! Neumann has been with the count on his estates since September. My illness has interrupted my correspondence with Fouqué, but I am reading much of his, and Robert hears from the baroness. My only amusement just now is corresponding with Gentz. Marwitz is said to be in Friedersdorf. Berlin is not more beautiful than it used to be, and everything else is more odious, so that in winter one hardly knows where to wish oneself! Prince de Ligne

1809–10 writes to me, and last week I sent him six pages of French without a qualm of conscience. Wolf the philologist has been lately in Vienna, and commends the amiability of Frederick Schlegel! Wolf's writing is exquisite, and surpasses that of any other German."

Altogether it was now a very dreary time for Rahel in Berlin. The pleasant social circle was entirely broken up. The young men, as we have seen, were scattered in many directions. Frederick Schlegel and his wife had left for Paris and elsewhere. Tieck was settled in Dresden. Fouqué had married the proprietress of a large estate, and was divided between devotion to his handsome wife and to his own fantastic heroes. Henriette Herz was dragging out a weary exile in the island of Rügen, as governess in the family of her friend Frau von Kathen. But the solitude of the place, beyond reach of the tiniest ripple of the tide of events, became insupportable to her at the end of two years, and she returned again to her beloved Berlin. The same financial depression which had so affected the slender pension of Madame Herz also told upon the remaining members of the Levin family. The house in the Jägerstrasse was given up, and in 1811 we find Rahel in furnished rooms, tormented by anxiety and loneliness, by grief for the state of the country, and uncertainty concerning Varnhagen. She sought distraction in visiting Frau von Grotthuss or the Schleiermachers, and in writing letters of infinite variety, from the philosophical to the trivial. Here is one of the latter kind, written to Alexander von Marwitz. His health had suffered much since the campaign of Wagram; with

shattered nerves, and his mind a prey to the gloomiest forebodings, he sought to regain some vigour by baths at Friedersdorf. 1800-10.

Thursday, 3 in the afternoon, May 9, 1811.

To-day, dear friend, this is only a greeting which I send you, although I have much to write to you, and in fact have written much in thought for two days past. Everything connects itself with you. Yesterday morning Nanny sat a long time with me, and later Madame Schleiermacher. In the afternoon came Harscher, with whom I went to Bellevue. He spent the evening with me; became subdued, after his fashion, which fashion is to be affected by nothing that is actually before him, not even myself! Nevertheless he said I did him good. I am scarcely alive, through exhaustion and irritation of the nerves: you may see this in my handwriting. I become weaker every day, although with some intervals of respite; some exalted moods, which I may try to explain to you.

I saw Madame Wolf and Frau von Grotthuss this morning. I have arranged a multitude of affairs, and also received a visit from Madame Bethmann. Now I shall dine and rest, then to see Wolf in a comedy. You shall have an account of the performance, also of the evening with Frau von Grotthuss. Her husband pleases me, and to-morrow, when I go with them to Madame Bethmann, I mean to pay him pointed attentions. I have already much consoled Frau von G., who is disgusted with Berlin. She said to me to-day, "I begin to feel better now that you are here again" (from Charlottenburg), and would not let me

1800–10. go. Again I am the Maid of Orleans. I, "who have accomplished all these miracles," how do I feel myself? Strangely enough, Marwitz; weary, tormented, but not ill. And how I treasure, how I appreciate whatever is left me to love. You will write to me. Adieu. How heavenly is the spring foliage here, the town seems under some wonderful spell of enchantment. I wish you had stayed until to-day, that I might have seen it with you. Of the Schleiermachers and the rest, another day. They are going to beg Bettine from me. Imagine it!

The baths at Friedersdorf might be all very well as accessories, but Rahel believed the spiritual healing of her friend depended much upon herself; so she varied the Berlin chit-chat with grave advice, with aphorisms, and fragments of thought, such as she was in the habit of thinking out for herself.

Friday morning. Half-past ten.
Brilliant sunshine; the shutters half closed.

If you had not written, "Answer me at once," I should have been uncertain whether letters of that kind pleased you, in which I pour out what happens to cross my mind. You do the same yourself, rather than respond to me. This time you are right, and this one expression is a response to all that I wrote. But in future, answer a little more what I have said. For instance, have you read Adam Müller's book? Your house pleases me; it is sensibly and carefully arranged. You ought to be comfortable in it, to sleep well within those thick walls, which shelter alike from heat and cold. Are the chestnut trees so close to

your window that you can touch them? Do you look in among the boughs, or right away beyond them? How do you occupy yourself? Can you work? You must give your body time to make progress. For this your spirit needs refreshment. The healthiest minds become so through other minds. As the healthiest organisations are most easily disturbed, so only the dullest minds can thrive in solitude. (Study this writing: it is achieved by a piece of wood pointed with scissors.) I fret myself to death about you, until you are set right. What can a man do with such a consciousness as you have? You cannot escape this epoch. There are only local truths; time is nothing but the condition under which they exist, work, and develop. All known beings are thus limited, each man to his day. Ours is a day in which our consciousness reflects itself with dizzy repetition on into infinity. To evaporate, to perish of inanition, is now the fate of the most heroic and gifted nature, especially if it be humanly gifted and allied to keen speculative power, imagination, and a strong but tender heart. In this shattered, new world, which has cast out alike Greeks, Romans, Barbarians, and Christians, there is nothing left for a thinking man but the heroism of science. Those state-heroes who first annihilate and then conquer do not require any particular consciousness. But you are a man doubly gifted, with a twofold intellect, and you stand gagged and bound. This is your misfortune. 1811.

Again Rahel writes on June 28th:—

"In Friedersdorf there is no society of the kind you need, intelligent, animating intercourse. You might

1811. endure it if you could at the same time carry out some severe study, or follow some occupation which would give freedom to your future life. But what in heaven's name is to come of your simply waiting there? I did once venture to hint that you should go to Teplitz, but your horror of idleness, your feeble plan about an appointment, your indefinite one about studying, combined to prevent my repeating it. Now, however, I am convinced it is Teplitz that you need. A lovely valley, a free and easy life in pleasant society, with the possibility (according to your present mood) of avoiding everybody whenever you like. There are baths of all kinds. You will find there Goethe, Gentz, the Duke, Varnhagen, Adam Müller, also Sprecher, numerous acquaintances of mine, and myself as organiser, as salt and savour to all these things! . . . The longer you remain where you are the harder it will be to move. In Teplitz it will be delightful, we shall see a number of people, enjoy their society, discuss them, study them, laugh at them. No one will prevent you from reading, bathing, or doing what you like. . . . I go to Dresden for a few days, and thence over the Geiersberg to Teplitz."

CHAPTER VI.

My cherished wishes blossom,
And wither again at a breath,
And blossom again and wither,
And so on until death.
This know I, and it saddens
All love and joy, once so blest;
My heart is so wise and witty,
And bleeds away in my breast.

HEINE, translated by Bowring.

DURING these two or three unsettled years Rahel had renewed her acquaintance and correspondence both with Fouqué and his wife. The letters of the latter deepen our impression of the painfully oppressed and suffering state of the country. Frau von Fouqué had been brought up at Nennhausen, an estate belonging to her father, Herr von Briest. It appears to have been within the radius of Berlin culture, since many families at home upon the neighbouring estates offered refined and intelligent society, which was varied in the Von Briest household by the frequent visits of literary men from Berlin. Thus Caroline von Briest had that double advantage not often enjoyed, the stimulus of personal intercourse with superior minds, combined with leisure in which to think over and mature the various subjects constantly suggested to her. She was alive to all that passed about her; receiving,

1811. assimilating, and then reproducing, with her own individual stamp, every impression from without. In person she was tall and graceful, with regular features, and an imposing regal air, which commanded much homage.

Caroline selected among many suitors Herr von Rochow, a young officer, possessing an estate in the neighbourhood, and attached to a regiment quartered at Potsdam. After a few years of married life gambling became his absorbing passion, and everything went wrong. Caroline was no Griselda, she took her three children, and returned home to her father at Nennhausen. The infatuated Von Rochow continued the same course until, in a fit of frenzy at his persistent run of ill-luck at the gaming table, he drew his pistol and shot himself.

Many well known philosophers and poets as well as dilettante writers found their way to the free and sylvan repose of Nennhausen. Among the young men scarcely yet known to fame was Baron de la Motte Fouqué, who, on plea of ill-health, had abandoned his military career and devoted himself to literary pursuits. He lived in an unreal world, the creation of his own romantic and unrestrained imagination. To think of Fouqué mixing in every-day Berlin life is as impossible as to conceive of Sir Launcelot eating dinners at Lincoln's Inn and writing for the "Saturday Review." It was superfluous to address to him that characteristic entreaty of Heine,—

> Oh, leave Berlin, with its thick-lying sand,
> Weak tea, and men who seem so much to know,
> That they both God, themselves, and all below
> With Hegel's reason alone understand.

The brilliancy and vigour of Frau von Rochow took the

dreamy poet as though by storm, whilst, on the other hand, his romantic mysticism acted like a spell upon her more practical nature. The end of the matter was that this fair-haired minnesinger, this poetic figure under the name of Fouqué, hung his shield and lance up in the ancestral hall of Nennhausen, and took its presiding genius as his wife and ruler over everything — except his pen. 1811.

Whilst Varnhagen, quite a young man, was studying medicine and coquetting with literature in Berlin, he became acquainted with the Fouqués through their common friend Chamisso. In the Whitsuntide vacation of 1807 he was at length able to gratify his long-cherished wish of visiting the hospitable family at Neunhausen. On the first evening of his arrival he was startled and surprised at the forcible contrast between Fouqué's delicate feminine appearance, his thin apologetic voice, and generally subservient manner, and the conscious power which marked every word and action of his handsome and stately wife. He felt a chivalrous attraction toward the apparently hen-pecked poet, and a corresponding aversion to the ruling authority.

Before long, however, he discovered that his sympathy and his dislike were equally misplaced. Fouqué was a crowned king in his own airy realm, where alone he cared to reign. In his writing-room, surrounded by old books and new manuscripts, his imagination had free play, and his fertile brain arrayed it in poetic figures and graceful language. He wrote with wonderful rapidity, rarely stopping to reflect or to make an alteration: his subject possessed him entirely. To him at least his mediæval

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1811. heroes appeared real, although a future public came to look upon them as "all armour and sentiment."

With Frau von Fouqué, Varnhagen explored the rural beauties of Nennhausen. In the first days of the "leafy month of June" they wandered through the well-kept park, round the lake by which it was enlivened, and out into the jubilant summer woods beyond. Thus he came to know and understand her better; to see not only her failings, which were upon the surface, but to divine somewhat of the intellectual power which was as yet undeveloped, and which in this world never found its accordant utterance.

Varnhagen took back with him to Berlin Frau von Fouqué's first novel, "Roderic," with a promise to see it through the press. Upon Varnhagen's testimony, the book, although rough and unpolished in style, bore traces of thought and vigour such as never appeared in Fouqué's writings, yet it was entirely eclipsed by them. Her admiration of her husband's work led her to endeavour to write after his manner. By degrees she abandoned all that was original and characteristic of herself, yet without being able to adopt successfully what was in truth quite foreign to her nature. She could not breathe the air of that ethereal region of light and colour in which Fouqué was at home. The warmth, the brilliant tones which sometimes play about her work, are not her own, but like sunlight through a coloured window, unreal and transitory.

Intellectual labour of some kind appears to have become a necessity to her, and Varnhagen gladly rendered such practical assistance as we find referred to in the following letters.

FRAU VON FOUQUÉ TO VARNHAGEN. 1811.

Nennhausen, May 6, 1811.

I must send you an account of my "Mythological Handbook," in order then to beg of you to offer it to Cotta, or some other publisher.

It includes the Greek and the Norse mythus, and is so divided between letters and four main sections, that the latter present a general view of the origin, the many ramifications, the development of the myth; and the letters, as far as possible entering into the hidden mysteries, will follow its course as an intellectual growth, an historical and natural organism. . . . I wish much that it should appear before the winter. You are kind, clever, practical —you will do your best for me.

It delights me to hear of your acquaintance with Pfuel and your friendship for him; I entertain the same feeling. Greet him heartily, and be as much my friend as he is; you are so already more than I desire. Your criticism on "Frau von Falkenstein" is humiliatingly generous, at the same time hoof and horns are not perfectly concealed. The revenge is fair and gentle, as it will be observed by few. Now I think our war is for ever at an end.

Your grateful

CAROLINE FOUQUÉ.

RAHEL TO FOUQUÉ.

On Thursday evening, you good, childlike one, they brought me your letter here, with the enclosure for Varnhagen. On Saturday they continued their journey, as we could best arrange it under existing circumstances, that

is, with the correspondence of the Austrian ambassador. How your letter will delight him! It has delighted me also, but in a different manner: your childlike nature touches me. How you speak of his and of your Muse. You were certainly once older than you are now. Do not live so much alone, dear Fouqué. I have seen and know that you are capable of lively, witty, many-sided utterances, therefore you also need them. Nothing should lie waste in us, least of all human intercourse; we need the inner stimulus which comes from such contact only. I do not blame your solitude so much as your stagnant complacency in it; your praise of it, your creeping away and burying yourself under the impression that it is good, fitting, healing for you. Behind it, or, rather, before it, is suffering, which should never oppress us, but is to strengthen, refresh, renew us, to make us fruitful in all things. And the sum total necessary to man is human intercourse, whichever way you look at it.

It is possible, after the inoculation of the greatest grief, to retain one's vitality. You are a poet, and give to men the greatest treasures of humanity. You shall not become a hermit. I have no taste for hermits, only for hermit thoughts among men. In short, I know nothing but mankind, and only thus can you appreciate solitude when you have it. That you so love your child, who can understand better than I do? But, if possible, do not love it too passionately—that is, with intensity. I have no child, but this relation is, perhaps therefore, my great study. Never can the child yield what can satisfy the parent's heart. You may rejoice in its existence, in its development, but the perfect blossom of its heart falls in

other fields. Say this to yourself early, at once. Do not wonder that I, childless, should yet know so much of parental sorrow. I have fathomed many depths of human suffering by the aid of one. I must be clear about all human relations, I must always have reasons, certainty; and it is the same with you. But I have a quarrel with you, dear Fouqué. How is it you write, but do not answer? Your acknowledgment of the letter Hanne brought you was like an improvisation, not a word of reply. I like an answer; you must praise or blame, acquiesce or contradict. Also, please do not be so delighted with Jean Paul's criticisms. From him, with his free and easy style, I hate them. A critique should be compact, to the point; while he meanders like a fantasia upon the pianoforte at best. Farewell. Write to me. And you will come and see us in the winter.[1]

Your good friend,

RAHEL.

FRAU VON FOUQUÉ TO RAHEL.

Nennhausen, March, 1812.

Robert wishes me to write to you, dear Rahel. I do so gladly; will you likewise hear from me gladly? How often I wish to talk with you; I think it very possible that we should understand each other. Not, perhaps, in broad and general views, not in full chords, but in single notes—those isolated tones which suddenly escape from one and are resolved in a universal chord. How few perceive them!

You always prefer talking with your friends to writing to them. You are right, speech is better for most people:

[1] Appendix J.

1812. scarcely so for me. I am distracted, confused, stupid in conversation, unless roused by strong feeling. In writing I rouse myself, I am conscious and collected, and say more clearly what I have to say. I am always the better for some restraint. I am too apt to lose myself; have done so times innumerable, but I always find myself again. That is a comfort, but not a compensation. Do you perceive this is such a tone, such a cry as I spoke of? Have you understood it? . . .

I am writing another novel. I live in it. How I wish that I could read it with you. As soon as I have finished you must have it, and tell me your first thoughts about it. One can never trust one's own judgment, and is therefore forced to beg for criticism from as many of one's friends as possible.

Is there any prospect of your coming here in the summer? You must do so; how much we could then live through together!

RAHEL TO FRAU VON FOUQUÉ,

Two o'clock, Sunday, March 23, 1812.

I could have written to you before you wrote to me, and I feel certain that we should understand each other well. To understand people thoroughly is an absolute and urgent necessity, which, however, is often hindered, and by a few trivial circumstances. From a variety of small conflicting purposes people become false, or else are stupid, and lack altogether the fine mental perception essential to the contact of mind with mind. You, dear Frau von Fouqué, appear to me at once intelligent and true, and the most intimate friendship would surprise me less

than the stagnation of our acquaintance. This impression I had about you at first sight, and it has deepened upon each subsequent occasion. I thank you therefore the more for your address, and for the mode of it. How frequently from want of enterprise, from sheer laziness, or from outward distraction, do we overlook precious things specially intended for us; and lay our hands upon those that are of no true value, sacrificing to them our days and our faculties in cowardice and discontent! 1812.

My gratitude for your letter expands itself into astonishment that you could write one so tender and so natural, at the request of another person. I do not think it would have been possible to me. In future, however, never send me an open letter. If my eyes are not the first to read the lines, it seems as though some spiritual fragrance must have escaped. Indeed, I carry my prejudice so far, that I never show a passage in a letter before sending it to its owner.

Believe me, dear Frau von Fouqué, I was already touched with that passage which you call "a cry" before you so referred to it. What do you mean by, "I have lost myself innumerable times"? Was your heart estranged? Or could you not make all things clear before your own inner tribunal. You go on to say, "but I find myself again," which is good, but does not make good. If my second question to you is true, then I believe that "finding again" does *make good*. . . .

To visit you this summer belongs to my ideal possibilities! How much could we then bring out, talk over, and learn from each other. It is a kind of blessedness to be separated from common things, to be in the free open air

1812. with one of cultivated, congenial mind. Had you not invited me I must have asked myself. But listen, while I tell you what really hinders me. If you had in your village an inn or house of any kind where I could hire rooms, I would come. If I could visit you, Frau von Fouqué, alone, all might be well. But in your house I should feel myself the guest of everybody else. I might behave properly, but I should never lose the thought, What are these others to you or you to them? I have no talent beyond my simple existence, you must take me as I am, nothing without *agrément*. Then further, my health, especially just now, is very uncertain. If I miss some indulgences I become ailing and useless. My maid, for instance, is absolutely necessary to the toilette of my health: also during many hours of the day I am quite unfit for general society. . . .

Whilst Robert was away I was ill and could not write. Be so kind as to tell this to Herr von Fouqué, with thanks and greetings. I am still weak, and writing wearies me. On this account Frau von Fouqué must pardon me that I did not write sooner. . . . I often speak with Marwitz of Frau von Fouqué. He is a sharp critic, or rather one on a grand scale, broad and simple. He praises you much, and lets you off easily, which is always a fresh delight to me. My best remembrances to Fräulein Clara. Certainly I should have come to the ball, but there was difficulty in procuring tickets, and I was too ill to raise heaven and earth.

You will reply soon? *Les mains jointes!* R.

FRAU VON FOUQUÉ TO RAHEL. 1812.

Nennhausen, March 13, 1812.

Shall I write to you in this troublous time? Shall I tell youof all the painful occurrences which are depressing my spirit, crushing my heart, embittering my life? Dear Rahel, I am often now moved to tears. I have hitherto been able to submit myself to the inevitable, but seem as though I could not do so now. You may learn from Neumann what is the state of affairs here; how the whole house is in possession of an *état-major;* how we hear only the empty words, and see the vulgar, insolent faces of our oppressors, and carry our stifled grief with us night and day. My fluent French draws upon me all the conversation. I talk and talk, and when the day is over I have said nothing, yet am worn out. In the town you can form no idea of what a burden a quartered enemy is in the country. The people are about one continually; added to which, in the evening we have to play at loto! loto! Think of it, dear Rahel! The most stupid and insipid of all children's games, yet it is far preferable to the stale jokes of yesterday, which reappear to-day and to-morrow.

March 22.

You will see from the foregoing how easily my life is disturbed, and how, with advancing years, I lose nothing of my unfortunate excitability, which has so often harshly disturbed the calm and order of my feelings, and set at nought the conclusions of common sense. Reason and individuality, how rudely do they often clash! It is easy enough to be wise when all is calm within and without,

1812. but when destiny seems to have set itself to tear us from our moorings, we find it is a different matter. . . .

I am tormented by a thousand anxieties. Robert has perhaps told you that I am expecting my eldest son. He does not come, he does not write, and the holidays are nearly over. I wait for him day and night. Do you know that torture when you start up at the opening of every door, and say to yourself, He is not there, all the while hoping that it is he? This happens to me twenty times a day. At night, I go through a wild tangle of dreams, and awake stupefied. God preserve to me the greatest blessing of my life, my children. That relation has been hitherto undisturbed, the only one that remains perfectly pure, true, intact. I do not know how I ——; but enough now. God keep us from further misfortune. . . . I shall send you before long a novelette, called "The Magic of Nature;" or it would be better still for you to order a copy in my name from Hitzig. Do not write to me until you have read it, and then write what you feel and think. No censure annoys me, even though it comes from tongues which bear a sting. There is always a groundwork of truth which it is well to hear. Tell me of anything that looks like mannerism. I hate patent phrases, yet they will escape one sometimes. I hope at any rate you may find sense and feeling in the whole. Farewell, dear one! Love me truly.—Your friend, CAROLINE.

FRAU VON FOUQUÉ TO VARNHAGEN.

Nennhausen, February 10, 1813.

I have to-day been deeply moved; what we have so long dreamed of is now true and close at hand. The sum-

mons of the king to the volunteers takes Fouqué away from here. Also my eldest son, upon whom I depend most, is constrained by honour, justice, and love of the good cause, to go forth into new and untried circumstances. The younger one has been some time with the army. Thus I am very much alone. I hope, however, that we shall, none of us, have time to think of ourselves. And I am glad to find that I have still so much courage and honour left that I do often entirely forget myself. It is not well to remain long unobservant of public affairs, one must follow them closely, in order to maintain one's self-respect. 1812.

There is now infinitely more at stake than the easy-going habits of every-day life. However all existing relations may be torn and distracted, something definite, I know not what, will arise from it all. There is thought and purpose in the action of the present crisis, and that alone gives hope and confidence. One thing is certain, that a dark future lies before me, an upbreaking of all the past. We never return to our old surroundings exactly as we left them. We rend away so much that never again fits in; time gnaws at the threads of old associations; they become rotten and shrivel up, instead of again attaching themselves. How often have I experienced that! What has been, never returns. The new may prove better, but I am no longer young enough to rejoice in it. At the present time I am oppressed by anxieties against which I have to do battle. I will pass on to something else. . . .

1812.

FRAU VON FOUQUÉ TO VARNHAGEN.

Nennhausen, June 2, 1813.

Thank God, the unfortunate month of May is done with! People are so ready to hope that the future will be better than the past. On the whole I hope very little, but perhaps we shall be relieved from this fearful anxiety. The oppression seems to stifle me, I cannot write or work or stay in the same place. I wander out across the fields and woods, where I never go at other times, and there alone I seem able to breathe. I dare not confess for whom and what I am so anxious. I do not like to look my thoughts in the face; one is so impatient. Only in prayer can one collect one's spirit. But one cannot, and should not, be always praying; at least, I should not. Such exaltation always precedes a fall with me! The extremes of life comes so suddenly before one, my temperament is so open, so mobile, I have to put the bridle upon my humility as well as upon my pride. The contending powers never wrestled more closely about any human being than about me. . . .

The war seems to be conducted in the most remarkable, unexampled manner, without regard to near or distant results. In Hamburg you must have had terrible days, and I trembled for the upright, honourable town. Now you are saved. We also have been threatened, but I never lost, even for an hour, courage and unshaken confidence. In Berlin they have again shown themselves weak. Somewhat of the spirit of 1806 still haunts their distracted heads! Imagine them following the example of Moscow!

We have had the corps of Czernitscheff in the neigh- 1813
bourhood, and have frequently seen him. He is genial, and reminds me of Prince Louis. We have also been very friendly with some of his adjutants; among them I was delighted to greet Marwitz in my house. He was as usual—half contented; but he loves his general, and expects much from him, so soon as he is free enough to follow his own inclination.

November 11, 1813.

To-day I greet you with a lighter heart than before. The first great blow has been struck, now we may hope for some progress. These lines will probably reach you just before or just after a decisive battle. The Crown Prince is on his way to you. North Germany will first be freed, since there are the fewest fortifications.

Pfuel will tell you particulars about Fouqué. He has come through the great battles of the 14th and 19th full of vigour for fresh contests.

We have frequently been threatened, and only narrowly escaped the devastation of the whole Mark lately, when the enemy succeeded in taking the bridge of Aak. Then I did experience hours of despair which I cannot describe to you. There could be nothing more terrible. Our armies beyond the Saale, the enemy advancing without hindrance, the fortresses his, the blood of Prussian and of Russian shed in vain, and freedom stifled at its birth. I prayed wildly, and if any cry of anguish could rend the heavens, mine would have done so.

You see what my life is, what wholly occupies my soul. I think of nothing but this great struggle, not so much of

1813. its outward course as of its momentous bearings; what it will produce, how the whole direction of the age will be altered by it! CAROLINE.

For some years after the peace of 1813, Frau von Fouqué wrote less, and became greatly absorbed in the society of court circles, where the political views of the Varnhagens rendered them unpopular. The latter also were absent from Berlin for many months together, and thus the intimacy gradually dropped.

In the mean time the feeling of the reading public underwent a marked change. Fouqué's tales no longer delighted, his knights and maidens lost their charm, his enchanted woods their mystery. With all the sensitiveness of a poetic nature, Fouqué writhed under the neglect and unkind criticism, which he believed to be the result of personal enmity. The practical sense of Frau von Fouqué enabled her to see matters more as they really stood, but the consolation was small and hard to administer. Thus she again has recourse to the friendship of Varnhagen.

FRAU VON FOUQUÉ TO VARNHAGEN.

Nennhausen, November 18, 1829.

Let me speak a few words to you in confidence. Your letter of to-day to Fouqué, in reference to his unsuccessful undertaking of the periodical, has disturbed and pained him. Since that time he has been failing. All literary effort has become burdensome to him; his spirit is broken, his pure and beautiful soul dissatisfied with the world. He needs much from without and still more from within.

He will not understand that it is possible to go out of fashion in Germany, to be forgotten as quickly as one was formerly appreciated; that one may even become a burden to the very publishers whom one has helped to enrich. He attributes it all to party feeling, and the persecution of some who entertain personal hostility towards him. I do not believe this of those who differ from him, any more than I could believe myself capable of it. He *feels* this also, but it is a kind of consolation to believe otherwise. 1813.

Be that as it may, you are in every case his friend; you are honest, true, and sympathetic. Help me to raise up Fouqué, to restore him to confidence in the inner calling to which God has consecrated him by nature and acceptance of the world. He must write if he is not to become stifled in the turmoil of his own fancy; he must write if he is to hold fast the links between society and his own active personality; he must write if he is not in his fifty-fifth year to abandon all the habits of his nature. But how shall we contrive to prevent the once celebrated poet from taking his manuscript round like a beggar, from running after some influential publisher, who turns from him with upraised shoulders and protesting hands, and thus adds humiliation to the sorrow of belonging to an ungrateful Germany. Help me, I entreat you, to save Fouqué from this. You were always inventive, you will be so now; and let that great human virtue, fidelity, give impetus to your thoughts.

Fouqué had hoped much from this periodical. He has now worked at it in vain for a year. . . . I repeat it, I have faith and hope in your fidelity, your cleverness, your judgment.

1813. Do not write at once—possibly not at all. In three or four weeks I shall be in Berlin. I shall then ask what you have been quietly thinking.

My kind remembrances to your wife. I give you no further assurances. This letter contains what, as an outspoken, open-hearted person, I cannot conceal or otherwise express.—Your

CAROLINE DE LA MOTTE-FOUQUÉ.

While thus grieved for the disappointment of her husband, Frau von Fouqué had still more reason for regret upon her own account. If his works had ceased to be favourites, hers were quietly ignored. She had committed the fatal error of renouncing her own individuality for slavish imitation, partly in a vain desire to share the popularity of her husband, partly also from admiration for his poetic talent. In vigour, in apprehension of life, in realistic power, she was undoubtedly his superior; but instead of simply obeying her own instinct, she lost herself in the attempt to follow into his region of phantasmagoria. She never understood wherein her true strength lay, and those unusual powers which should have ripened to a rich harvest wasted away or became perverted to lesser ends.

Thus in sadness and disappointment Frau von Fouqué ended her days at Nennhausen. Fouqué mourned for her sincerely, but the outer world gave no sign.

CHAPTER VII.

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light;
In front the sun climbs slow—how slowly!
But westward, look, the land is bright.
ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH.

WHEN Varnhagen left Steinfurt it was to breathe the freer atmosphere of Prague, then the neutral gathering-place for those Germans whose patriotism had rendered them obnoxious to Napoleon; for irrepressible Prussians like Lilienstern, Sternberg, Majors von Nostiz, von Pfuel, and others.

Just at this time also the imperial edict against Freiherr von Stein had reached Berlin. This man "of the name of Stein, who was causing disturbance in Germany;" was to be arrested and his property confiscated. In January, 1811, Stein left Berlin, pursuing his journey on to Prague in a sledge, and under the starry winter sky recalling Schleiermacher's new year's sermon upon "What a man has to fear, and what he has not to fear."

Napoleon by this act of tyranny thought to clear from his path an objectionably clever minister, instead of which he built up a political power, that directly or indirectly worked against him, until *le nommé* Stein controlled in Paris the affairs of the banished emperor.

Varnhagen rejoiced in Stein's arrival at Prague: he

1811. cherished a reverent admiration for his clear intellect, his boundless information, his uprightness, his human interest in everything that surrounded him. There was an attraction about the very ruggedness of his temper, and his sublime contempt for appearances, although upon these, as upon many other points, the characters of the two men were essentially divergent. Stein occupied his enforced leisure at Prague with the study of the French Revolution, aided by files of the "Moniteur." Every stage of its progress he discussed with Varnhagen, who, while characteristically maintaining his own opinions, went through a course of modern history as well as of practical statecraft in his conversations with Stein. Arndt's *Geist der Zeit*, which appeared about this time, was read by him with outbursts of enthusiastic admiration. He encouraged all Varnhagen's literary efforts, holding up to him Arndt's writing as a model.

"This is the thing at which you must aim," he said energetically: "practical truths, not metaphysical phrases. Do you understand me, Herr Metaphysicus?"

Such inglorious repose was, however, soon brought to an end by the invitation of the Emperor of Russia. In May, Stein left Prague, to join Alexander at Wilna. In the same month Napoleon also left Dresden, moving with his army towards his fate—in Russia.

Rahel had, as we have seen, arranged to spend the summer at Teplitz. Varnhagen came to meet her at Dresden, on her route, and arrived there early in June. They spent several fugitive, delightful days together. Here, as everywhere, Rahel found friends, and abundant society. Stray members of the old Berlin circle reap-

peared in Harscher, and in the artist Meier of Rathenau, 1811.
the appreciative friend of Jean Paul, who painted his portrait with the sympathy of a poet as well as of a painter. The artistic tone of the few days' intercourse in Dresden was confirmed by the presence of Sulpiz Boisseree, of Cologne. There, as in some other provinces handed over to French dominion, the suppressed national vitality forced a way for itself in the study of old German art, of that mediæval handicraft which expressed the healthier life of other days. Görres and Frederick Schlegel both worked in this direction, and Boisseree was a somewhat independent follower of the latter. In most congenial companionship, therefore, Rahel wandered among the art-treasures of Dresden.

The company Rahel found at Teplitz in this season of 1811, while apparently enjoying itself in the usual round of dances, picnics, and spectacular performances, might be said to embody the political discontent of Germany. Rühle von Lilienstein and others, who dared not open their lips out of Bohemia, had come over from Prague. The Duke of Weimar could not only enjoy the physical sense of freedom in climbing the wooded slopes round Teplitz, but also give utterance to his political opinions and feelings, which were entirely hostile to Napoleon. Among military men of all classes he was personally a great favourite, while in society his brightness, his refined culture, made itself felt as an intellectual stimulus. Upon both of these accounts, as well as from his friendship for Goethe, the Duke was especially attractive to Varnhagen and Rahel. His rooms were near to those of Rahel, and they used to exchange morning greetings from their respective windows.

1811. The Duke of Wurtemberg with characteristic good-nature sacrificed himself in various ways to promote the general festivity; while as an Austrian field-marshal he asserted his firm belief that the disgraceful union with France was but a temporary evil. Prince de Ligne, despite his French proclivities, was another malcontent. He expressed his ideas upon the political position without remorse, and with a piquancy which greatly enhanced their popularity. Princes, counts, and countesses abounded on all sides. Rahel's friends, Baroness von Grotthuss, Madame Frohberg, and Frau von Crayen, arrived from Berlin, and were accounted social acquisitions. Later also came Clemens Brentano, A. F. Wolf, and Fichte. Beethoven, too, might be seen wandering in the wild unfrequented walks of the lovely Teplitz gardens. There he once or twice met Rahel, also enjoying a solitary ramble. He was much struck by the expression of her face, and a common friend procured for him the desired introduction. As the acquaintance ripened, instead of obstinately refusing to touch the piano in the presence of others, as he so frequently did, he would sit down and play to her his newest unpublished compositions, or lose himself in impromptu phantasies. Between Beethoven and Varnhagen the acquaintance grew into friendship. They met daily, interchanging political sympathies, and making arrangements for a dramatic composition, for which Varnhagen promised to supply the words.

As the first anniversary occurred of the death of the Queen Louise of Prussia, a few of the most demonstrative malcontents in Teplitz endeavoured to make it a great public occasion for the utterance of patriotic sentiments.

But their zeal was misguided, and the whole scheme ended oddly enough in a high mass, arranged for a Protestant queen by Berlin Jews. All these apparently holiday-making men and women who promenaded in the Clary Gardens, drank mineral waters, inaugurated picnics, and performed chamber dramas, were more or less tormented by undefined apprehensions. From Hamburg and other unfortunate places under French dominion came private news of the ubiquity of the French police, of domiciliary visits and arrests, of the discovery of combinations so secret that the suspicion of treachery could hardly be avoided. Naturally, Napoleon felt it to be important that, while pursuing his conquests in Russia, the provinces in the rear of the army should be bound hand and foot. 1811.

Even in Teplitz there was a mysterious lame visitor, who called himself Count D'Estourmel, and betrayed a suspicious eagerness for introductions to those Germans who were most outspoken in their discontent. Frau von Crayen, Rahel, and other ladies would have nothing to do with him. The Austrian officers made him the butt of practical jokes: one of them gravely remonstrated with him about his obviously assumed lameness, protesting that he ought to make up his mind as to which leg he intended should be lame, instead of limping sometimes with the right, sometimes with the left. Altogether his espionage must have been of small advantage to the French government.

With the shortening summer days Rahel began to think of returning to Berlin. As a matter of health, the Teplitz visit had not been successful; the undercurrent of political

1811. uneasiness and personal anxiety had proved too strong. Under the pressure of very limited means, she had contrived not only to hold her social position, but also to work quietly in her own way for the benefit of other sufferers from the prevalent financial disorder; and while her cheerful benevolence assisted some, others experienced the bracing influence of her hopeful patriotism, which was ever alive and active. Prince de Ligne proposed to Varnhagen to follow him as his adjutant to Vienna. It was an offer holding out many temptations, many promises for the future. But Varnhagen saw that it must involve relations to France against which his whole soul rebelled, and he remained true to his former purpose. Whether he worked with sword or pen, it must be against Napoleon.

So the pleasant weeks came to an end, Varnhagen rejoining Count Bentheim at Prague, and Rahel starting for Dresden, where Marwitz waited to see her further on her journey. She wrote thus to Varnhagen the morning after her arrival :—

"Dear, good Varnhagen, how and where is he? What is he doing? These were my constant thoughts during my journey here, alike by day and by night, in the lovely mist, in the clearest, richest sunshine, alone, and in company. Yesterday was the worst for you, yesterday evening: the sun had disappeared under the earth, and you had not seen your dearest; and many such days have yet to pass! Hear this consolation, that I grieve much more over the separation from you than I ever thought I could do. I have also a nervous, uncomfortable feeling, as though cut off from protection, safety, and love. I seem to go round

and round myself, searching and asking, To whom and to what do you belong? 1811.

"Yesterday evening I took a glorious walk with Marwitz and Lippe, about a mile along the Ostra meadows. You know how much I like Marwitz. We were all friends, and often walked in silence. Most impressive was the wide horizon, the ruddy splendour of the evening sun, the endless avenues of these trees, more solemn and altogether different from those in Bohemia. Still, I could not but think to myself, you are alone and strange here. If these two do not go along beside you, and even if they do, still you are alone and strange; to them you are not the nearest, dearest of all. . . .

"We are to have war; what say you to it? You must look to Berlin for news about the country, and to me for what concerns our own affairs.—My dear friend, I believe fully in your best nature, and in your love to me."

After a short stay in Prague, Varnhagen resolved to seek his discharge from the Austrian service and to return to Berlin. He received from Metternich, Gruner, and Alexander von Humboldt recommendations to Hardenberg and other diplomatists. Upon the eve of his journey, however, he was somewhat startled to be summoned to an interview with Prince Wittgenstein. From him he learned that Count D'Aubignose, who was in authority at Hamburg, had sent instructions to Berlin for the arrest of three dangerous persons, Pfuel, Varnhagen, and Willisen. Varnhagen declared his innocence of any conspiracy against the French, however willing he might be to meet them once more in open fight. He arrived in Berlin to

1812. find all his actions observed. While associating with the most influential men, he was crossed and hampered on every side. The only gleam of comfort through this dreary interval was the occasional delight of Rahel's society.

Meanwhile, in this autumn of 1812, it will be remembered that Stein was at St. Petersburg, holding the wires of the various diplomatic relations in which England, Prussia, and Russia were concerned. When the early winter set in with unusual rigour, he was almost severed from European affairs. To save himself from the dreaded possibility of idleness, he sent for Professor Gräfe, and set to work upon Thucydides, until in December he was able thus to write to Wallmoden about the outer world.

"The French army is annihilated. Napoleon flies, and in his flight drinks much for warmth and consolation. The Emperor left yesterday to join the army which enters Prussia, and in a few days I am to meet him at Konigsberg. Tettenborn and Winzengerode are covering themselves with glory, and you—who surpass both, amuse yourself with travelling about Europe! Come to us at Konigsberg."

Scharnhorst was now again minister of war, and hastened to develop those plans which he had been laboriously maturing for many years. Upon the 3rd of February he issued a proclamation to the educated classes throughout Germany to enrol themselves as volunteers. The King, feeble and faithless, had opposed this measure. After his arrival at Breslau, a day or two later, when

looking out of the castle window, the King observed a long train of waggons full of men. 1812.

"What are these?" he inquired.

"They are the volunteers from Berlin," replied Scharnhorst: "nine thousand of them. Is your Majesty now convinced?"

The King turned silently away, with tears in his eyes.

Thus the good cause progressed in spite of the indecision of Austria and the persistent and fatal fidelity of the King of Saxony to the side of Napoleon. It was during this spring, so full of turmoil and military activity, that Goethe passed through Dresden in search of quiet in Bohemia. Conversing one day with Körner, who had just joyfully despatched his only son, the poet, to join the Lutzow volunteers, Goethe testily exclaimed, "Napoleon is too strong for you: shake your chains as much as you will, you cannot break them, but only drive them deeper into your flesh." This was repeated, with some righteous indignation, to Stein, who quietly said, "Let him be, he has grown old."

To Goethe the interest of a battle-field consisted not so much in the extinction or the glorification of a German principality, as in its splendid contribution to the science of osteology. He was concerned about man in the abstract, either philosophically, aesthetically, or anatomically—not with the Germans. He hated politics, which reached his ear only as "a tale of little meaning—chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil." Wrapped in the calm security of their philosophic theories of universal brotherhood, Goethe and other thinkers had dreamed that, by its intellectual culture, the

Æt. 42. 1813. German nation was for ever placed above the barbarism of war. Had other nations by any felicitous means, philosophical or otherwise, arrived at the same conclusion, might not the dream have become a reality?

Early in 1813 the Russians crossed the Weichsel into Germany. General Tettenborn with his Cossacks chased the last French soldiers through the streets of Berlin. Varnhagen renewed the acquaintance which he had formed with the General in Paris. Eager to resume arms, he gladly accepted Tettenborn's proposal to become his adjutant, and an exchange was readily effected from the Austrian to the Russian service. Together therefore they started for the campaign which Tettenborn had already planned in North Germany.

Rahel, in the mean time, did not allow her patriotism to exhaust itself in words or tears. She possessed the enviable faculty of turning her best thoughts into deeds. They did not remain, according to Jean Paul's lament, "like mountain summits which bear no vegetation."

Of her daily occupations, first in Berlin and during the busy winter at Prague, we find her thus writing.

To Varnhagen in Hamburg.

Berlin, April 20, 1813.

Tuesday morning, 11 *o'clock, with cool, stormy weather; bad for the fruit blossoms, of which many are already out.*

This morning I have been about in all directions, distributing to the soldiers the shirts which Markus has given. I must do it, because I will not allow myself to be put out by any amount of trouble or any distance, or by the idle gossip of common people: further, because I know, the

prompter the help, the more efficient it is. I also know what it is to be too weakand ill even to bear fresh linen put on, and can sympathise with those who have none to change. Our largest hospital is in a frightful state, owing partly to bad management, partly to deliberate depredation. But as soon as it became known in the town, there was a universal movement of indignation and of active help. Everybody exclaimed, and came to the rescue. I wrote to Markus, he again to Böhm, Böhm to the civil governor. Within three days large contributions were made of all kinds of necessaries, and sent to the new hospital; to which also the doctors drove, heavily laden with purses of money which had been sent to them. Linen and beds were sent, also provisions, which were cooked by a hundred and twenty-five women: no one thought of sleep or rest. It has cost me some strength, but I am in health at present, and can bear much effort. Yesterday, and again to-day, I have walked from Trinity Church to the Landsbergerstrasse. — All this I write to you with tears in my eyes, tears of delight at the spirit which our town has shown. Æt. 42. 1813.

The Jews give all they possess, it was to them I first turned. Henriette Herz is infinitely busy, and I urge her on. My heart does so rejoice to see the people thus waking up, and doing as Christ would have them do; doing what it was torture to me to see left undone. What a grief to me has been the state of this hospital! Now Reil has taken the thing up; to-day I must see Böhm; I cannot rest!

The "German Observer" is much appreciated here. I cannot keep a copy; all the gentlemen in the town are

Æt. 42. reading it. I approve thoroughly what you have written
1813. in it. Let us but keep our courage, a pure will, and a right judgment, and they are welcome to call us Vandals or Trojans! Dear, good August, in this terrible time do make an effort to write something about the hospitals, not only about our last catastrophe. My heart has been so oppressed by all that I learn from Reil and others. Reil says it is of no use setting up another hospital, unless the women will take it into their own hands, and arrange all the administration as well as the nursing; that in no hospital in the world are the sick nursed as they should be; and he knows all about it. You must tell people plainly, earnestly, how it is the most dreadful of all sins to cheat the sick and helpless; that every town which will deserve the name, which has a church within its walls, and lays claim to justice, human or Divine, must give up its most honourable citizens personally to undertake and superintend such work, so that no agents can again make their fortunes out of the hospital. Do not name our town, but tell what horrors went on in the midst of respectable well-intentioned people. All Germany, all the world must be compelled, not only to hear such exhortations, but to back them up by their own exertions.

Dear August, how slowly we progress! When shall we come to life? All is preparation; you who seem in its midst are but putting in readiness. And I—but I have lived through much, and await what is still higher. That is a great good, although it be neither easy or agreeable! Ah, we know all! We will remain strong and diligent. Life is a work which is appointed for us.

Half our duty is rightly to comprehend it, to take firm hold of it, then to bear it. We must not undervalue it because both in breadth and detail we find it so uncertain. We should prize it as the rehearsal of another existence; it is all that we know, and through it we divine the possible. God give our dear countrymen courage and modesty. The poor country suffers fearfully. Each poor fellow wrings my heart. Mere villagers, but they behave admirably. Everywhere there is courage, good-will, help of all kinds. I have no room for the number of anecdotes which are on the lips of all. . . . In Breslau, a number of ladies were in consultation about collecting money. A young girl suddenly left them, and presently returned with three thalers. They saw at once that she had parted with her hair. A messenger was sent to the hairdresser, the long fair locks were bought back and made up into rings, which have sold at high prices for the good cause. Perhaps it is not much to give one's hair, but the story is charming. Æt. 42. 1813.

Early in the summer Rahel was glad to take refuge in the neutral ground of Prague, and wrote from thence to Varnhagen.

Prague, June 19, 1813.

DEAR AUGUST,—This is my fourth letter to you from here! According to the opportunities which have occurred, I have sent them in the hope that one might reach you. But now, I really cannot write all the same over again! In brief, I came here a fortnight ago with my second brother. I am Madame Brede's guest. Louis is also here. The town is full of my countrymen. I have

Æt. 42. 1813. written to your friends by the last post; to them I owe my asylum and life here. Tieck also is in Prague, we see him every day, so genial and pleasant. He is very pleased with the theatre here, and thinks Madame Brede excellent as "Francesca," and told her so to-day. Goethe is coming; the Lämels have taken rooms for him; the Liebichs I see frequently, they are extremely kind.

The day before yesterday, August, I had your letter from Hamburg of May 27th. But since then I have written to you all the love out of my soul. Where I am to go, I know not. For the present I stay in the care of your friends, and with joyful pride thank you for everything, for the journey and for the asylum. The Colonel loves you; he will think that you must come as soon as you know that I am here. . . . I have just asked Augusta to tell you something about Tieck, the theatre, and her career. Our talks with Tieck will be very useful to her. He has said to her word for word what I had already told her; for instance, that after "Francesca" she should play "Lady Macbeth." I am full of the war, but from excitement cannot write about it. . . . Be courageous, and trust me so long as I live. R.

Prague, September 16, 1813.

. . . Since the Dresden affair we have an immense number of wounded here of the three hostile nations. The unfortunate creatures lay last week in carts, crowded together in the narrow streets, some even on the bare stones, all under drenching rain. I shall never forget the time. The government was not prepared for the great numbers, or rather not for any at all! As in the olden

times, it is the townsfolk who have done everything. Æt. 42. 1813.
They fed and tended the sufferers in the streets or on the floors of the houses. The Jewish girls distinguished themselves; one nurse bound up three hundred wounds in one day; in short, impossible things were done. Still we could not stem the tide of pain and sorrow. We, Augusta Brede, my noble hostess, Frau von Reimann, and I did and gave all we could; cooked for them, sent linen and charpie. The women of Prague did well. I ran to the Countess Moritz Brühe and begged her to beg of her relations, which she agreed to do. I wrote an urgent letter to Frau von Humboldt and also to Lea Mendelssohn, Bartholdy's sister. Yesterday Caroline sent me a hundred and thirty guldens, so I can now lend to the richer ones among the wounded, and for the rest buy shirts and socks, and have dinners cooked for them. In short, I have a small bureau; my intimate friends assist me like angels; I have helpers of all classes. . . . God has smiled upon me. I can help a little.

Yesterday afternoon, just as Tieck brought to me a young countryman to whom I was to advance some money, the door opened and Marwitz stood there; in rags, with both arms bound up. He is alive, is the same as of old, is in health, but has eight wounds. His horse fell upon him and crushed him; the Poles then rushed on him with their clubs and knocked his sword out of his hand; one of them took it up and gave him three cuts on the hand and arm; another thrust at him with his lance; a third fired a musket at his head, but missed. The colonel then came up, rescued, and took him prisoner. Through a thousand adventures he has made his way here; with a crust of

Æt. 42. 1813. commissariat bread tied up in a handkerchief, and in a peasant's ragged smock. Now he wears linen and a coat of Robert's. Frau von Reimann has cleared a room for him, and he dines with me. He is simple, good, true, silent, gentle as ever, without a shade of prejudice about all that has happened. . . . Farewell! I have no more time. Oh, the fear, the sorrow, the excitement of these war days. God protect us, protect thee, our poor country, all sufferers. Now the surgeon is here. Farewell, and when you think of me, remember, I care, I pray, I even hope for you. Thine R.

To Varnhagen in Lüneburg.

Tuesday, changeable weather, very windy.
October 12, 1813.
Still with Augusta.

Where am I to spend the winter, our enemies permitting? Whither shall I go? Where is there any home? Why should I be condemned to wander in marshy mountain regions? Here I am welcome and at ease, that I have practically discovered. There are two prospects of happiness before me; first, that I have read Augusta's character, which has no defects, but a thousand attractions. She is born to be lived with! Then there is the happiness of being of use to sufferers of all nations. For this purpose I have already thirteen hundred guldens. Frau von Humboldt sent me more than a thousand, and Bartholdy three hundred. From the prince again I received six ducats through the Ambassador Bernstorff, who drove about in a coach seeking me for two days, through the

stupid direction which Gentz had given him. Also from Bartholdy's sister I have had a hundred and fourteen guldens, and the hope of receiving more from the capital. Æt 42. 1813.

I am in communication with our commissariat and staff-surgeons. I have abundance of charpie, linen, bandages, socks, and shirts. I have gratuitous cooking in several quarters of the town. I look after thirty or forty soldiers myself. I arrange and see to all, making the very utmost of my resources. On this account I depute nothing to other people, I despise the help of the public officials, as well as the public thanks which would then come to me for doing my plain duty. But time I have not. The correspondence, the accounts, addresses, receipts, walks, consultations; all my small beginning, in fact, branches out into a large business. And I tell you of it all because you will be glad. My countrymen come to me for advice, help, comfort; and God permits me to give it them, so insignificant, poor, and low-born as I am! I am ashamed that God has sent to me the happiness of helping, and comfort myself in my inaction while you are fighting with the thought that I can thus heal and help. I know when I have said the right word of consolation at the right moment, by the sudden smile of joy that breaks out from under the cloud on a suffering face. The convalescents come to see me. Our men have behaved splendidly. I believed it of them when they marched out, but now they are brave under their wounds. They are all eager to go back to the army, modestly, without self-consciousness. I have had a feverish cold for a week, and have cured myself, but was obliged one day to keep my bed. So I established my bureau before my bed, and

Æt. 43. 1814. transacted the business. It could not be called rest! . . . In a former letter I told you that Marwitz suddenly appeared a week or two ago. He is well; his hand improves; he sits at the window reading Plato. I could report signs and wonders of him if I dared confide them to a letter.

Among the many friends with whom Rahel resumed pleasant intercourse in Prague, were, as we have seen, the genial and handsome Tieck and the indefatigable Gentz. The pressure of creditors having made it necessary for the latter to leave Berlin, he had transferred his services to the Austrian Government. He was now in the zenith of his political career, directing the diplomatic affairs of all the European cabinets, and making himself indispensable to them by his astuteness and literary skill. At Rahel's house he was a frequent visitor, esteeming highly her advice and criticism upon all matters, whether political or sentimental.

Amid all the complications of benevolent activities, social exactions, personal suffering, financial difficulties, and incessant anxiety for her friends, Rahel received from Berlin intelligence of the death of Fichte. During this winter he had resumed his lectures at the university, while his wife had been working nobly at the overcrowded hospitals. Madame Fichte was at length attacked by nervous fever, from which, after a period of anxious nursing, she began slowly to recover. Before she was convalescent, Fichte sank under the same disease, and passed away in a deep sleep upon the 27th of January, 1814.

"The priest of knowledge, the apostle of freedom, the martyr of humanity," Fichte was associated intimately with Rahel's highest intellectual growth. She honoured the great effort of his life, that of bringing men to a sense of the divinity in their own nature, of leading them persistently on toward the highest ideal of virtue, independence, and self-denial. She loved him as a personal friend, and spoke of him always with tender reverence as her "dear master." To her brother Moritz Robert, she thus writes. Æt. 43. 1814.

Prague, February 14, 1814.

Although a thousand matters surround me, impatiently calling me away from writing; although another thousand jostle each other for the precedence of being written first; although I have heard since Friday that we have won a battle in France, so that I at once forgot all my sorrows; let us first speak of our revered friend and master, into whose hand one could put life and honour unreservedly. I have thought this a hundred times, looking into his eyes (and now fiercely regret never to have said it), the highest thing one noble thinking being could say to another; and I, contemptibly, never had the courage! Let us speak of Fichte. With him Germany loses half its power of sight; we may well tremble for the rest. I know of no other like him. Now the Furies may rage round us as they did around the Greeks; now ignorance, lies, errors, may spread themselves like rank unchecked weeds over field and furrow, draining away the goodness of the soil; there is no longer a hand to root them up, to sow pure nourishing wheat, to tend it, to garner it, for the growth of other generations. Fichte can sink and die!

Æt. 43. 1814. Is it not like an evil enchantment? Yesterday, ill as I was, I saw it unexpectedly in a Berlin paper. I felt more ashamed than shocked, ashamed that I should be left alive; and then I felt a sudden fear of death. If Fichte must die no one is safe. I always think there is no safeguard from death like really living; and who lived more fully than he? Dead, however, he is not; cannot be! Is Fichte not to see the country recovering itself from the war? border marks and hedges replaced, the peasantry improved, the laws mended, the schools re-opened, sharp-witted diplomatists recovering royal favour, new laws established, thought free to utter itself to king or people,—this alone a happiness for all the future! Is the man who understands these things, and whatever else is essentially German, as perfectly as others misunderstand them, is he never to see the upgrowth of what he sowed in the dark furrows with the sweat of his brow and the strong yearning of his soul?

Lessing! Lessing too is gone. Remembered only by a few. He who had to fight for ideas which now stand in every day's newspaper; which have become so commonplace that people forget the originator, and repeat them time after time in stolid imbecility! . . . Lessing, Fichte, all such honoured men, may you see our progress, and bless it with your strong spirits! It is thus I think of the saints, enriched by God, loved by God, and faithful tc Him. Peace be with our revered master!

Already Rahel was upon the point of breaking down under her too arduous duties, when she was called upon to nurse her hostess, Frau von Reimann, through a dan-

gerous illness. Her indomitable will bore her up through this effort, but when the necessity was over, her strength failed, and she lay helpless for many weeks. It was long since she had received any reliable news of Varnhagen. In extreme anxiety about him, she wrote to General Tettenborn. Æt. 43. 1814.

Prague, April 17, 1814.

DEAR GENERAL,—I entreat you in God's name, and for the sake of all those who are dear to you, write one word or send me some tidings here of Varnhagen. I know nothing of him since the 17th of February, when I received a letter from him at Trier. Having been a prisoner to the house for the last five months, I went yesterday to the theatre for the first time, where Count Christel Clamm said at once, in reply to my question about you, that both you and your adjutant were wounded. Perceiving my alarm, he endeavoured to make a jest of it, in which I half believed, since I had read all the papers. The count said he had seen the report in a paper a fortnight before. I told my fright to an incautious woman, who said immediately she also had read the statement in the papers. By degrees the report has been repeatedly confirmed. My last illness was inflammation of the throat, and I remember having been unable to read two papers: it must have been in one of those. What I read was that General Tettenborn had entered, without a blow, into Chalons, the burghers having opened their gates. However it may be, I look to you for the truth, as speedily as possible. I am prepared for the worst. If my friend lives, and can hear, tell him that I am calm and can take care of myself; that I knew before he marched out what war was, and would

Æt. 43. 1814. never have had him remain at home. If only he is not a prisoner, not in a hospital! I will not add another word, dear general. I have written to the man in you whom Varnhagen has taught me to know and honour. It is said that *you* are slightly wounded.—Faithfully yours,

R.

But fate was better than her fears. On the 15th of October the French left Bremen, and Tettenborn led his troops through the narrow streets of the Free City to its bright little market-place, where the grand old Rathhaus and Rolandstatue have looked down upon so many centuries of change. The keys of the town were given up and delivered to the Crown Prince of Sweden on the 18th of October, upon the victorious field of Leipsic. After this battle, so decisive for the fortunes of Germany, Tettenborn proceeded by forced marches toward the Rhine, and thence into France. Passing safely through the many dangers which surrounded them as an advanced guard in an unknown country full of hostile peasantry, Tettenborn and Varnhagen entered Paris with the allies in April, 1814. Napoleon had just signed his abdication at Fontainebleau, and Stein was at the summit of successful power, in Paris, looking down with already waning hatred upon his fallen enemy.

A month later, the bitter suspense happily ended, Rahel writes to Varnhagen, in Paris.

Prague, May 23, 1814.

Monday, 8 o'clock in the evening.

I am "happy" now, August, as you tell me to be, now that all my fear and sorrow were in vain. In my heart I often

say, I cannot help being anxious, only God grant it may be in vain! I am happy, August, that you are alive, that your death was not one of those moving atoms whose invisible development, amid the whirl of the universe, was irrevocably ordained before the creation of the world! Had it been so, I must still have borne it, as I have had to accept the death of Marwitz,[1] and to bear all misfortune and all that is denied to us. The relief from such a sorrow is like the sudden cessation of a heart spasm, such as I know well. While it lasts, we pray as though there were nothing else in the world to be delivered from, and God knows that we have to bear it out before a change comes. Our highest, least intelligible life, flows out into a wider stream than at first appears, and perfects itself through every variety of sense and feeling. (This sentence is not mine, it is too good.) Æt. 43. 1814.

In the early morning lately I dreamed that I stood with Marwitz opposite the Krause's House, in Berlin, which was full of officers, on account of a review. Horses and grooms were before the door, officers stood in the windows, but I did not look at them. I was too full of astonishment at Marwitz and at those other dear ones who have died, and whom I now saw all as in life: mamma, Veit, Gualtieri, Selle, Herz, and many others. I did not like to question Marwitz about himself, and so asked him of the others. "Are they all alive? did they not really die?" and so on. His only reply was a slow, half articulate "Hem! hem!" Mean time I had looked up at the windows, and perceived Prince Louis standing at the open window in his general's uniform, with powdered hair. I greeted him as prince,

[1] Alexander von Marwitz perished in the engagement of Montmirail.

Æt. 43. 1814. because there were people standing by. He returned it in a friendly manner, as in life, but with an ironical air, as though he knew how surprised I must be, and felt how much more he now knew than I did. I believed the news of all these deaths to have been false. I went into the house, and in the large, but somewhat dim public room I found them all. I speak to mamma, but she remains silent. I am delighted to see Marcus Herz; he looks fresh and blooming, his hair just curled and dressed; he is also pleased to see me. Next, to my infinite delight, I see Selle. "How glad I am!" I exclaimed. "Tell me what to do for my dreadful rheumatism." He shouted in haste, as though he had no time to spare, "Sulphur baths!" "No, no," I replied; "they tell me I must go to Teplitz." "I know," he said; "sulphur baths!" "It is not gout, nothing of the kind." "I know all," he repeated. "I know; sulphur baths!" Now therefore I am perfectly resolved to take them, and leave the physicians to themselves. I have no special one at present. I believe only in three in the world, whom I will not name, and in one above all. God has sent me this dream. You know what my dreams are. I am most awake when I sleep. Also I have had a feeling of comfort ever since, as though I *should* see my dear ones. Truly I have lost too many matadores for my time of life. We will die together, also live. Enough, you will come and fetch me *certainly*.

Rahel followed the definite advice from dreamland and went to Teplitz, whither Varnhagen also followed for a few weeks of relaxation.

Æt. 43
1814.

To Frau von Grotthuss.

Teplitz, August 19, 1814.

. . . Never forget that everything may change, and miracles still happen. You and I have often experienced this, in unexpected help, in life begun again afresh. Those moments ever recur in which by prayer we are brought nearer to the immediate, the Divine Author of all wonders. Hope confidently for this. It is the brightest, the only true light which prevents the terrible darkness from becoming total. Consolation there is none, or else there would be no sorrow. It is with such thoughts only that I am able to strengthen my heart against the worst.

On account of Varnhagen's affairs I cannot decide when I shall come to Dresden, but in any case I shall see you. I would gladly know where I shall settle. I know only this, that, setting aside the region of polar bears, icebergs, and vampyres, there is little choice. The good and bad are about even anywhere, and conflict never ceases. This is especially true now there is no longer a capital nor a nation. No upper guiding world, only questions without answers, peace without advantage, one universal ferment. . . . We are very busy. That is, Varnhagen and the Woltmanns: they are upon the same floor with us. They write and read much, and have piles of newspapers; so I also hear and read and talk a little—as much as the baths will allow. We have such peaceful bright walks together, and I am as proud when they admire this lovely country as though I had made it myself for the express purpose of delighting my friends with all the wealth of light and shade, of green foliage and fragrant herb. R.

Æt. 43. 1814. With the return of Varnhagen and Rahel to Berlin, in September, 1814, we are brought to the year of peace, and to the third volume of our romance. After their many difficulties, toils, and harassing separations, our hero and heroine are at length married. We find nowhere any record of ceremonies or festivities in connection with the event. To publicity and show Rahel had a deep-rooted objection, and just at that time of year there was probably nobody in Berlin.

In pursuance of those plans which with Stein's advice Varnhagen had laid out for himself before the final war of liberation, he now returned to his diplomatic career. Diplomacy was to rearrange the disturbed affairs of Europe, and the prospect before him was naturally not one of idyllic calm.

CHAPTER VIII.

When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat;
Yet fool'd with hope, men favour the deceit;
Trust on, and think to-morrow will repay.
To-morrow's falser than the former day;
Lies worse, and while it says we shall be blest
With some new joys, cuts off what we possessed.
Strange cozenage! None would live past years again,
Yet all hope pleasure in what yet remain;
And from the dregs of life think to receive
What the first sprightly running could not give.

DRYDEN.

WIELAND once wrote, "The artist plays with nature, the philosopher with ideas, the poet with his imagination, the coquette with our hearts, and kings, unhappily, with our heads." A few decades later he might well have added, and the diplomatist with our destinies. In modern history the fate of an individual, however obnoxious his opinions may be, is rarely sacrificed to royal caprice, while upon the clear-sightedness of a diplomatist may hang the destiny of a whole nation. Civilization in her rapid progress shatters the dynastic faith which nations are supposed to cherish, and the "divinity that doth hedge a king" is fast becoming a tradition. The responsibility of actions, and of opinions even, is already transferred from the shoulders of royalty to those of prime ministers, privy councillors, or members of parliament. It is the statesman rather

1814-15. than the monarch who must combine a clear insight into the policy of others, with the most consummate skill in baffling all efforts to fathom his own; who with felicitous discernment knows precisely when the favourable moment has arrived, seizes it, and steers his vessel into the desired haven, or, it may be, loses his opportunity and precipitates a national calamity. Diplomacy, like war, is a "succession of mistakes," and that side bears off the colours which errs less frequently, and with promptest address turns to its own advantage the blunders of the adversary.

It was with such objects that the uncrowned monarchs of Europe, Metternich, Gentz, Talleyrand, Castlereagh, met at Vienna in the autumn of 1814. How assiduously the affairs of the nations were discussed, and the welfare of peoples as well as of cabinets was promoted, it is not our purpose to inquire. The true key to the acts and protocols of this congress is said to lie in that innermost and second secret history of it which only one man could have written. Gentz alone succeeded in seeing everybody else's cards, while cleverly concealing his own. But the Vienna Congress had its social as well as its political aspects. Many a knotty question was decided, many a delicate diplomatic move accomplished, during the morning promenade or the evening banquet.

In Vienna, the days of humiliation were quickly forgotten, the last traces of its tears were already laughed away. Over the still dusty ruins in which the enemy had laid its ramparts, thronged crowds of citizens and strangers, displaying elegant toilettes, and enjoying the music of the military bands. The Vienna baker, his morning labours over, would saunter out into the mellow

sunshine, and feast his eyes upon the spectacle of half 1814-15.
the royalty of Europe taking the air like ordinary mortals. He would see the Emperor Alexander arm-in-arm with Prince Eugene Beauharnais; the Emperor of Austria listening intently to the vivacious talk of Prince Talleyrand, while on the other side of him walked the brave Archduke Charles; Hardenberg and Stein passing and repassing, absorbed in eager converse; the Prince de Ligne escorting some lovely archduchess; German dukes in every variety; Lord and Lady Castlereagh astounding the Vienna world by the individuality of their morning toilettes; and a brilliant galaxy of titled beauties, whose evening entertainments, no less than their morning promenades, formed a distinctive feature in the history of this famous congress. The gorgeous receptions given by visitors somewhat disorganised the usual free and genial tone of Viennese society. That delightful combination of refinement and cordiality, so characteristic of the lively city, received an admixture of French thought and custom not entirely to its advantage. Brightness, warmth, music, laughter, form a kind of atmosphere in which the semi-oriental nature of the Viennese reposes, and develops its untiring faculty for sensuous enjoyment. That the Viennese go through their round of fashionable gaiety, not as the penalty of position, or as "the thing to do," but because their general sense of the pleasure of existence makes it positively delightful, is one of the curiosities of natural history.

It remains, perhaps, an open question how far this social atmosphere affected the various members of the congress, and influenced their solemn deliberations; but

1814-15. the well-known saying of Prince de Ligne implies volumes—*Le Congrès danse bien, mais il ne marche pas!* It should however be remembered that the lively courtier could no longer dance.

General Tettenborn had been fortunate in securing quarters for himself and Varnhagen in the crowded city. The work which the latter undertook at the suggestion of Stein, and under the direction of Hardenberg, was the writing of a popular and stirring pamphlet upon the annexation of Saxony to Prussia, one of the questions then coming up before the congress. The fighting at an end, Napoleon deposited in Elba, each of the allied sovereigns brought to Vienna his little bill of expenses in the late war. Each one was anxious to have it settled, not in paper money, but by some long coveted substantial slice of territory. Alexander maintained that his great sacrifices could only be compensated by the possession of Poland; Francis felt that Lombardy alone could console him for what he had suffered; and Hardenberg, on behalf of Prussia, asserted the right of conquest over the traitorous king and the helpless kingdom of Saxony. Varnhagen no doubt saw, as other Prussian diplomatists have seen, the happy identity of the question of German unity with that of Prussian aggrandisement, and proceeded to execute the work in the spirit of a patriot and a Prussian. The pamphlet was ultimately published in Saxony by Cotta, and Varnhagen was much gratified that it should be approved by Gentz and abused in the "Allemania."

It was not until the end of October that Varnhagen was able to find very humble accommodation, which made it

possible for Rahel to rejoin him and take her share in the 1814–15.
stirring life. "For my part," writes Varnhagen, "I should have been willing that these straitened circumstances should last for ever. The old faith, that to the loving heart a cottage becomes a palace, was abundantly realised. The wide strange world beyond my charmed circle became daily stranger to me, and I gradually neglected it more and more. Occupied in earnest work, made happy by Rahel's long desired companionship, I needed nothing more, and both curiosity and ambition loosened their hold upon me."

All the adherents of Prussian interests were welcomed by Varnhagen and his wife, and from the little centre of their house radiated many of the plans, ideas, and witticisms which were reproduced in the daily journals.

In this Prussian coterie we again meet with Rahel's early friend, Dorothea Mendelssohn. After training her to a masculine independence of thought and character, her father had disposed of her in marriage, with quite oriental despotism, to a middle-aged friend of his own, David Veit. Dorothea did her best to love him, but in vain. She devoted herself to her two boys, but was absolutely starving in intellect and soul when fate brought Frederick Schlegel to Berlin. Dorothea had no pretension to beauty; her face was plain and unattractive, with the exception of her fine eyes, which gave sudden brilliant revelations of a soul within. This intellectual power attracted Schlegel, and by slow degrees Dorothea came to centre in him her worship of intellect. To her friend Henriette Herz, who had long seen her unhappiness, Dorothea turned for counsel and advice, and Henriette

1814-15. bravely undertook to tell the whole story to David Veit. A separation was arranged, and Veit generously settled upon the elder boy a sufficient income to enable them to take a house together, and subsequently he gave the younger also into her charge. About a year afterwards Dorothea married Frederick Schlegel, and they left Berlin, to live in Paris, Jena, and Vienna. Here we find Dorothea, an ardent patriot, eager, active, strong as of old, but with the same craving melancholy in her sad eyes. Her worship of intellect had proved a delusion, and a second time she had been cast upon the rocks. The frigid egotism of a born pedant like Frederick Schlegel might well disenchant the most zealous worshipper. Together, however, they went over to the Roman Catholic Church, and we see the curious anomaly of the author of "Lucinde" being lost in enthusiastic admiration of those oriental mystics who stood agonised on stone pillars, and cultivated birds' nests in their hair.

Another of the early friends of Rahel who was also transplanted to Vienna, was her cousin, Frau von Eybenberg. As Marianne Meyer, a handsome Jewess, lively and well educated, she had commanded much admiration. Her life was thwarted throughout by the barrier of caste. Among her many suitors was Count Christian Bernstorff, then in the Danish embassy at Berlin, but his father peremptorily interfered and broke off the connection. Some time after this disappointment, she accepted an offer from Prince Reuss, the Austrian ambassador at Berlin. He was a good, brave, ugly man, several years older than herself, but sincere in his attachment. By a cruel freak of destiny, on the morning of her wedding day she

received from Count Bernstorff a renewal of his proposals, 1814-15.
the death of his father having made him his own master.

Prince Reuss was devoted to his wife, but he was of a royal house, and the marriage could only be a morganatic one. Etiquette permitted them only to visit together outside the range of the court circle, and Marianne did not even live in her husband's house. Upon the death of the prince these difficulties increased, the conventional world of Berlin thrust her back into her former bourgeois condition. Against this her pride rebelled. She went to Vienna and procured an interview with the emperor, laying all her grievances before him. But the paternal monarch could not make her Princess Reuss, so he bestowed upon her the title of Frau von Eybenberg. In 1811, when her health was rapidly failing, Count Bernstorff came as Danish Ambassador to Vienna. He met accidentally Henriette Herz, who was then visiting the Baroness Arnstein. His first question of her was, "Where is Marianne Meyer?" He sought her out, and was unremitting in his kindness to her until her death in 1814.

There appears so little to attract about her clear hard intellect and her cool worldly wisdom, that we cannot but wonder what the fascination was which she exercised, and whether it was only that of personal beauty. Goethe's admiration of her, and pleasure in her society, no doubt contributed much to make her famous. Writing to Schiller in 1797, he says, "The celebrated Marianne Meyer is also here. What a pity it is that she did not come a few days sooner. I wished so very much that you should become acquainted with this remarkable woman."

By Gentz, on the other hand, she was held in special

1814–15. aversion. In his letters he has once or twice referred to her in terms of strong dislike. Upon one occasion, when writing to Rahel against Goethe, he concludes thus: "He (Goethe) does not really enjoy being in anybody's company except that of Marianne Eybenberg, and that is the hardest thing which I believe it possible to say about any human being!"

The elder sister of Marianne Eybenberg, best known as Frau von Grotthuss, seems in the same way to owe her celebrity quite as much to the letters of Goethe and to the eulogium of Varnhagen as to any personal excellences. Henriette Herz, who is rarely so severe about her friends, speaks of her as pre-eminent in that qualification said to be the only natural gift which cannot be cultivated—stupidity. She was handsome, well educated, extremely amiable, and gifted with boundless self-complacency. In her early youth she had heard the flatteries of Lessing and of Herder, later in life she became the friend and correspondent of Madame de Genlis, of Prince de Ligne, and of Rahel. Goethe always professed great friendship for her. His letters, however, are few and of no great interest, the subjects being mainly the failure of Marianne's health, Madame de Staël's book on Germany, the representation at Weimar of Ludwig Robert's tragedy of "Jephtha," and the safe arrival of certain dried goose breasts, which gave special satisfaction. Frau von Grotthuss died at Oranienburg in 1828.

In the diaries of Gentz[1] we have glimpses of the Vienna world where the rush of life was most rapid, the thirst for pleasure most insatiable; where the play was the

[1] Appendix K.

highest, the society the gayest, and the dinners, under the auspices of Parisian genius, were beyond reproach. While devoting his clear intellect and untiring energy to the cause of "enlightened conservatism," work was never allowed to interfere with the pursuit of pleasure. He lived two lives, distinct in character and purpose. Hence his mild upbraidings of Prince Metternich, that on more than one occasion a political discussion had been permitted to drift into talk about the relation of the latter to the Duchess of Sagan, the restless beauty who subsequently became notorious for her emancipated ideas upon the subject of divorce. 1814-15.

There is an entry in December, 1814, of a select little dinner given by Gentz, including the Count and Countess Bernstorff, Varnhagen von Ense and Frau von Varnhagen, Humboldt, Prince Frederick of Coburg, Binder, Dr. Bollman, Prince Reuss, the Gräfin von Fuchs. *Le diner avec les accessoires a duré jusqu'à 9 heures.* It is probably referred to in this letter of Rahel to her brother Markus, who appears to have been at this time her principal correspondent.

To M. Th. Robert, in Berlin.

Vienna, December 7, 1814.

Varnhagen sits beside me, finishing despatches for the courier; he sends, therefore, only a greeting, and thanks, and assurances for the future. We are still in the "Stift;" to-morrow we remove from a favourite street to a quiet square and up two high flights of stairs; here we are upon the ground floor. This evening I drive to Fanny Arnstein, whose reception yesterday I missed.

1814-15. My health suffers too much from heat and crowds, and after every such gathering my cough takes nearly a week to recover itself. Gentz has put off the dinner because the ladies whom he wished to meet me are wanted at court for *tableaux vivants*. He gave me my choice to dine with him without the Countesses Bernstorff and Fuchs, or with them and wait until Monday. I chose the latter, mainly because the thing is at least postponed —I cannot bear ceremony—and because I am particularly anxious to see these two matadors of amiability. Gentz also prefers it. Countess Fuchs is sister to the Countess Plettenberg, who visited us in Berlin, and all the gentlemen are in love with her. The other lady is the wife of Count Christian Bernstorff. I once saw an exquisite letter of hers. She is so admirably wise that she quite astounds me. (You love all this gossip, do you not?) The night before last I heard the "Magic Flute." Call Moritz to witness! You will scarcely believe that I discovered, through the marvellous execution, touches of melody where I had never suspected them before, with all my musical perception. I went there mainly because I had heard that Righini's rendering of certain passages was individual, and not in strict accordance with the text. The show and general representation of the piece is behind ours in Berlin. The "Queen of Night" stepped out of a very large moon, which was unrolled among canvas clouds. She had on a crown of silver paper, upon which trembled moon and stars in the purest tin. She sang the unmeaning airs with a worn voice, but with such traces of past excellence that the public remained complaisant. Her name is Madame Rosenbaum; she must

be fifty, but she is the first person who ever taught me 1814–15.
what staccato is; not the mere folly which those singers execute who are not born to it. Imagine, this singer brings out that highest note with a restrained power that makes it like the utterance of a broad sound, expressive of anger, grief, and terror. One admires and learns. . . The orchestra playing here is soft, thoughtful, and correct; its strength does not consist in tearing about like the two Webers, the thin one in Prague and the stout one with us. Altogether, no town in Germany is in a worse musical condition than Berlin; and, naturally, so much in the dark about its own state, because it spares no trouble or noisy effort. Weber, Zelter, Iffland, are greatly to blame, and also Righini, who gives way from love of applause.

Vienna, January 15, 1815.

The conferences last on; one says this, another that; nothing definite is arrived at, no conclusion come to. We shall not get all Saxony. I shall be glad that it is not so at present. Saxony and Prussia belong essentially together, and will certainly do so when some great event happens. But the practical difficulties in the present confused condition of Germany are immense. I hate war, and the Germans do not readily fight against each other; their feeling is opposed to it, and they are naturally inactive; they must be driven to cut and kill. But with other nations war will break out presently: then we shall take the one side, and be practically separated. It seems to me that what unity we have in the country will only bring us *under* one government, the others will not unite with us *through* any harmony of their

1814–15. governments. That is how I think the matter stands; there is little to be done. The nature of great things, countries, and peoples is essentially right when left to itself. So for the present—peace. Tell this to Moritz; the wisest here think Prussia and Austria will remain friends. (I am now frightfully disturbed by the Russian Colonel Nostiz.) When are Ludwig's songs to be printed? Varnhagen and Nostiz are interrupting me till my cheeks are red and blue with worry and excitement. Not a minute's peace!! Farewell. I will write a word to the children. Greet Nettchen and all household friends.

Rahel found the whole tone of Viennese society different to what she had been accustomed to enjoy either in Berlin or Paris. Late hours, crowded rooms, sumptuous dress and entertainment did not constitute social intercourse according to her simple ideas: the physical exertion wearied, and the unreality oppressed her. Hence her somewhat sarcastic accounts of the Vienna doings. Writing of a public military funeral, she says to her brother Moritz:—

"The ceremony in the St. Stephan's church (an exquisite building, made for thought and prayer) cost 40,000 francs. But the decorations produced a pitiful effect, being without general plan or suitability to the building. Coats of arms, pieces of cloth hanging down in broad strips, and fastened at the top to a big silvery—not silver—crown of France. Some benches covered, some not. A melancholy statue of Religion with a cross on its arm, and beside it a bust of Minerva! Another wooden

statue representing the testament of Louis XVI., covered 1814-15
with plaster of Paris drapery! All very well for an evening garden entertainment! Altogether nearly as inappropriate as the funeral of Turenne, which I saw at the Pantheon in Paris. Admittance was by ticket. Count Flemming sent me one for a good position, but I did not go, on account of the cold, the crowd, and the wearisome waiting. I saw the church afterwards. The music also was said to be worth nothing.

"Yesterday at midday the great sledging party at last came off. You must believe me, not the newspapers. There were most elegant convenient chariots (not of the modern bad fashion), which looked very well, and were mounted on good sledges. The horses were all harness, and the trappings all bells, covered with gold and silver! Quite imperial. Each one was attended by six servants in elaborate livery, surmounted by three-cornered hats: they were supposed to be outriders, but not to crack their whips. In every sledge was one lady and one gentleman. The ladies in furs and hats of all colours, but all of the same fashion. Only Therese Esterhazy, the niece of our queen, was differently and better dressed. She wore a hat of blue velvet, with crape and gold, a white feather, coquettish, charming! Lady Castlereagh (not handsome or young, but colossal) in yellow, with a shawl fit to drive one mad. Julie Zichy, cherry brown, a brunette, very beautiful, and like our queen. Countess Fuchs in ponceau. All were gay, but she was the loveliest. With my lorgnette I saw her distinctly pass my window three times. The outriders wore different colours, the gentlemen uniforms. The king was very much cheered. . . . Al-

1814-15. though De Ligne is with his fathers, the congress still only waltzes. Major von Hedemann wagered yesterday they would all be at home in six weeks. But I believe no one; all are equally ignorant. One thing more,—I entreat you to send me some tea; millions cannot buy it here, and before we can turn round the congress will be over."

To Moritz Robert, in Berlin.

Vienna, March 12, 1815.

I had arranged in my mind all that we have heard about Napoleon since yesterday, in order to send you the information, but I find it briefly stated in the "Observer," which I will send you to-morrow. The prince who met him is the Prince of Monaco, the same who also sent hither the courier. Napoleon was not depressed, but excited, as on his sledge drive from Moscow to France. He asked impetuously of the prince whether he had observed no movement in France and Paris, which he had just left; he would not believe that all could be quiet there. *Vous ne savez donc rien?* he said, and told him that the congress here had broken up in confusion. The prince was taken to the bivouac which Napoleon occupied, as the small fort had been refused to him. Now we have to await this affair: on Tuesday we shall have a post. Perhaps you may have earlier news through Paris, because we learnt yesterday that there they have telegraphic communication. Peschier's companion, Fries, and others defer their journey for the post day. Monaco really knows nothing; Napoleon is right. I saw yesterday a letter from Paris from a rich man of business with large con-

nections throughout France, dated the 28th, when, of 1814-15
course, Napoleon's arrival was not suspected. But the report in that was more than nothing! It spoke of active movement, with all details of names and streets. This Napoleon alarm will be turned to account, as the first was. They talk of a proclamation to be issued by the allies against Napoleon, and any who receive him, and which is to announce the protection of the Bourbons. That would make me very miserable. The nation must be left to itself, and not be again forced together, just as it was twenty years ago. As it is, the army, according to my letters, burns for action somewhere, and looks longingly towards Belgium. Are we ourselves to carry the torch to this unhappy conflagration, which already finds inflammable matter on all hands! I shall be surprised at nothing from existing powers, and hold, in opposition to every one else, that it is a misfortune for these rulers to be still together here; each man should stand by his own country, however many different names there may be in Germany. I fear that all too quickly another generation will see one Germany, as it is prophesied—Germany united, France divided. But I—of the old generation — must rouse myself from this melancholy reflection—a reflection which is so natural, yet which has disturbed, shaken, saddened me. The generation is old, and must die. Thus must we ourselves also die. All that we knew and valued in our youth, fades, perishes, dies. And when one of us has to die? How fortunate that I must go first! My parents, the root and stem on which I leaned, have gone; my leaves drop, but if branches beside me fall, then my life is over. . . . I feel oppressed to-day — oppressed with the

1814–15. burden of age, that is, with the eternal confusion of affairs and events; the separations, the sufferings, the removal of early companions, the death of dear, bright, heart-friends. And because repose is of all things most necessary to me, comes all this turmoil of places and of states! I could weep. Humboldt, Gentz, Wiesel, the Countess Pachta are here; but how do we live with one another? Of course I laugh, talk, see people, make acquaintances; estimate and prize my relation to Varnhagen, and am as though the very best had happened to me. So, last evening, I quite enjoyed a soirée at Frau von Arnstein's, with an excellent French lady, with Frau von Ephr: with much to see and hear, and much laughing at table! To-day I went with the Arnsteins to a brilliant concert, where a young man had an opera tested by connoisseurs, which he had made. (Made the opera, I mean, not the connoisseurs.) It consisted in reminiscences. In the afternoon I saw Count Bentheim's sister for a few moments. Yesterday I walked out in the most lovely weather, and I saw and spoke to many people. So do not pity me! Thus it is however. Vienna pleases me better in the spring, and if I must remain, with Krusemarck, certainly better still. But I shall be glad to leave it. In short, whatever happens is right. I love and need my family, the children, and old acquaintances.

To M. Th. Robert, in Berlin.

Vienna, March 16, 1815.

. . . Yesterday thirty-two persons dined with the Chancellor,[1] including myself and four other ladies. He

[1] Hardenberg.

did the honours in the most genuine manner, and so im- 1814-15.
presses people (like myself, that is) with his real excellence, that one must love him, and know him at once. I quite pitied him under the two and thirty, as I used to pity uncle. He stands high in character and in perfect culture. But I cannot talk with deaf persons, and only did my best. It is a great misfortune, because he is fond of conversation, and listened eagerly to catch the lively talk going on between Humboldt and Varnhagen. On Varnhagen's other hand sat Stägemann, Schöler, Grolman, Bartholdy, Count Flemming quite at the end. No rank, no ceremony. Jahn, whom I was so curious to see, appeared in muddy boots, great-coat, and cap, without necktie. Humboldt wished that he should be presented to him by Varnhagen. He sat quite at the end, and was well received by Prince Radziwill and others. . . . Jahn came upon his own impulse; he wants some addition to the twelve hundred thalers he already has. He brought me a message from Nolte. In his whole bearing there is that habitual energetic geniality remarkable in Hagemeister sixteen or eighteeen years ago, *kraftgenieich;* his appearance also reminds one of him. As yet I know nothing about him; I shall observe. Humboldt assured me after dinner (like Don Giovanni) of his love. He has the same regard for me, but sees me rarely because I am always doing things he does not like. He is going to give me a dinner! (To me, a dinner. You see I am dead, and not yet in heaven!) This will be a joke for Ernestine! I am to choose the guests, like a queen. I said he had better love me less and come and see me; then I would think about the people to be received. I must go. . . .

1814-15. Throughout this winter of 1814-15 the crowd of conflicting interests complicated by jealousy, ambition, and mistrust, had continued to surge hither and thither without any perceptible onward motion, until a grave probability arose that the congress itself would plunge Europe into war. This was averted by the news that Napoleon had escaped from Elba. Many vexed questions were at once brought to a speedy settlement. On the 18th of May a treaty was signed, by which Prussia obtained possession of parts of Lusatia, Thuringia, and some territories on the right bank of the Elbe, at the same time that she ceded to Russia the southern districts of Poland.

The month of June saw Vienna a comparatively deserted place. Varnhagen was summoned to Berlin, to meet Hardenberg on diplomatic business. Rahel gladly availed herself of the hospitality of her intimate friend the Baroness Arnstein. They had been early companions in Berlin, and sympathised strongly on political subjects, if not upon many others. The baroness was the daughter of Itzig, a wealthy banker in Berlin, by birth a Jew, but sharing the philosophic culture of Friedländer and Moses Mendelssohn. In this intelligent circle the natural capacity of the young girl had been developed to its utmost by reading and by constant intercourse with men of intellect. Her linguistic talent appears to have been remarkable, and was called into constant exercise: at the same time her intellectual powers were undoubtedly below those of her friends Henriette Herz or Rahel. Her beauty was of a lively expressive character; her manner dignified and aristocratic, enlivened by playful humour and an occasional dash of satire; her whole nature was animated by

a sincere benevolence, which spoke sometimes in pas- 1814-15.
sionate words, oftener in silent deeds. Her marriage with the Baron von Arnstein brought her into a prominent position in Vienna. Her intellectual gifts, which in the German Athens had been somewhat overshadowed, produced there an extraordinary effect. On all sides the admiration of the amiable and the envy of the malicious were roused by her social talents, her tact, her indomitable energy. The Viennese, true to the oriental vein in his character, takes no thought for his own morrow, still less for that of his neighbour. Frau von Arnstein had a range of thought far beyond the boundary of to-day. This vitalised her sympathy until it became action, and she learned to look about her, to discover the burden of whose to-morrow she might help to lighten. Benevolence and hospitality gave in the open Arnstein house an assured welcome to the active merchant or the aristocratic idler. The hostess was at the pains to become acquainted with the circumstances of her guests, and, with that originality of heart which pre-eminently distinguished her, she could often suggest some happy solution of a difficulty, or fresh course of conduct, and follow it up by carefully considered aid of the most appropriate kind.

During the consulate, Frau von Arnstein had spent some time in Paris, and had left it with a strong prejudice not only against Napoleon but against the French nation. This was naturally strengthened by the reverses of the Austrian army. She cherished, in fact, the combined animosity of a Prussian who believed in patriotism; and of an Austrian whose one faith was the prestige of the Austrian army. She threw herself with characteristic enthusiasm

1814-15. into the popular movement, and was able to devote money, time, energy, to organisations of various kinds connected with the good cause, and to lessen by her wise benevolence the privations which fell in some shape upon all classes during the crisis of the War of Liberation. Working with Frau von Humboldt, she sent to Rahel in Prague, and to many others, supplies of linen, provisions, and money. Thus she poured her one drop of comfort into the cup of human sorrow; for however just a war may be in purpose, or successful in result, it brings the same repeated suffering, of wasted lives abroad and darkened lives at home.

During the Vienna Congress the social popularity of the Baroness reached its height, and all the notabilities were to be seen at her assemblies. At the same time she indulged her unchanged Prussian proclivities by smaller gatherings of intimate friends, which would include the Schlegels, Humboldts, Justinus Kerner, the Varnhagens, and the Austrian writers, Caroline Pichler and Zacharias Werner. It was probably the only coterie in Vienna where literature ever became the subject of conversation.

The subsequent history of the baroness is briefly told. After the death of her husband, Prince Karl von Liechtenstein tried every means to induce her to change her religion and become his wife. The baroness steadily refused. A rival of the prince, a Freiherr von Weichs, met with equal discouragement, and attributed his own failure to the success of the prince. He therefore sent him a challenge: the rivals fought, and the prince fell. This incident overshadowed the remainder of her life: she travelled awhile in Italy, and returned to Vienna with

shattered health. Before very long her death made a blank, not only in the gay circles of the capital, but in many a grateful and loving heart. The baroness throughout her life had exercised a pure and invigorating influence in the midst of a society whose chief characteristics were of a very opposite kind. 1814-15.

Rahel's letters to Varnhagen during the summer of 1815 were of a mingled character. Regret at his absence, joy and satisfaction in his love, uncertainty, anxiety, and much social amusement and distraction fill the closely written pages. The country house at Baden, outside Vienna, to which the Baroness Arnstein retired, was full of guests. Swimming baths and mountain rambles occupied the mornings; dancing, music, easy social talk, and moonlight expeditions brightened up the evenings. The brilliant visit ended, Rahel removed in August to Frankfort-on-Maine.

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CHAPTER IX.

Should civilization ever be a prosperous and successful thing, it will give an assured continuity of leisure, and friendship will revive among men.—SIR ARTHUR HELPS.

AT Frankfort, in 1815, Rahel first saw Goethe. The incident is thus reported to Varnhagen.

TO VARNHAGEN, IN PARIS.

Frankfort, August 20, 1815.

Sunday Evening, a quarter before 11.

Nein, August, what a happiness! I cannot go to bed without telling you all about it; I am all impatient for you to share it. Yesterday in a letter which I sent to you through the Chevalier Capodoce-Pereira, and which you will not receive until Wednesday, I sent an account of our stay here. This evening the Jettens have left, and I am established in very pleasant quarters. It is a low house just opposite the playhouse; it has no courtyard; my sitting-room looks into the avenue, and my bedroom into another street. The Vallentins are at the Swan, just opposite my bedroom. I dined with them most agreeably, and drove out into the lovely region, the *Götterort*, at five o'clock. . . . We pass out through a handsome gateway, along a grand quay beside the Maine, past well kept gardens and vineyards, in the most perfect weather (such as we have not had for twenty years), till we reach the *Forst-*

haus, where we take coffee. Then we wander out into the forest, and skirting it, we come upon a beautiful broad meadow, and a village lying in the sunshine. The gentleman asked if we should like to see it. I reply, "The sun is too strong, we will defer it." "It is Niederrad," he said, "the village of which Goethe wrote so often, and where he used to go with his young friends." "Then we will go, despite the sunshine," I say, and a shudder passes all through me. We wander on in cheerful desultory talk to the village, which has streets like those in Austria: I do not like that. There are a few people about, and on in front of us drives slowly a low half carriage. Three ladies in black sit in it, there is a footman, and a gentleman on the box, who drives. I look into the carriage, and see Goethe. The shock, the delight makes me wild. I cry out, "There is Goethe!" Goethe laughs, the ladies laugh. I seize hold of Vallentin, and run on ahead of the carriage; then facing round, I see him once more. He laughed most good-temperedly, looked well at us, and held to his nose a little bunch of green sprays with which he fanned himself, to conceal his amusement, partly from us, and partly from the company in the carriage. At last the slow pace slackens entirely, the gentleman upon the box turns and says, "There is the Swan!" That is the little inn which Goethe says he always visited. So Goethe was making a pilgrimage back into the days of his youth, and I, *your* Rahel, meet him, and make a kind of scene—take a momentary part in his life! This is better than any introduction, any acquaintanceship. I failed to see him the second time. I was all flushed, red and white, and lost my courage. When he had driven on, past a factory and avenue of

Æt. 44
1815.

Æt. 44. 1815. poplars, out of the village, I trembled all over for half an hour. Aloud and audibly, I thanked God in His evening sunshine. . . .

To Varnhagen, in Paris.

Frankfort, Wednesday, August 30, 1815.

On Sunday, the talk was naturally about Goethe, and Otterstedt offered again to go and bring him, which I forbad: he was only to let him know who it was who cried out after him in Niederrad. Frau von Schlosser thought I should drive with Otterstedt straight to Councillor Willemer (who is a Prussian), and call on the ladies there! The very last thing for me! No plan pleased me. I must see Goethe differently, naturally, like everything else. You know how through life I have sought acquaintances for the sake of others rather than for myself. Otherwise, one looks so foolish. What should I say to Goethe? If he thinks of it, he knows how I love him, or how I do not love him; the latter, though, is just what he does not understand. . . . I have had so infinitely much from him, he nothing from me. Thus I leave it, contented. It seems to me that we have to leave behind us so often what is of the greatest value in life if we are to remain true to ourselves. This I have learned and experienced; I have strength for it. On the other hand, I am ignorant, and do not understand it. Certainly the greatest men are those who develop and perfect themselves through successful happiness. Such an one I am not. I neither know nor hope for such strength, but such men I should like to know; although I feel inclined to say with Schiller's Elizabeth (rather stupidly to Posa), "I respect no man

any longer." Their gifts or their genuine character I may esteem and honour, but an entire man I have ceased to admire. On the whole, they are not better than I am. Marwitz was the last who stood above me; it cost him many tears; this angel found me hard as stone; still he was not more than I was! Can you understand me? But I am not going to make a catacomb of my heart for you, as Mollendorf used to say. Now I will tell you the truth about the neighbourhood (exquisite grapes, I must put one into your mouth, they do not delight me here by myself). On my last two visits at Teplitz, I found that after a while the most lovely valley becomes tame, from its fixedness of outline. The same too of a mountain, unless some opening is left out of the bounded existence into the distant, undefined, infinite. This is true in Baden, and here also. And although our own poor valley of sand brings always the painful thought that we can get to nothing pleasant without perpetual driving, still the broad whole contents, and one never feels *affadirt*. This truth, which I have here so badly expressed, has undoubtedly influenced the Brandenburgers and Berliners: there are fewer fools there than in other provinces. . . . Æt. 44. 1815.

To VARNHAGEN, IN PARIS.

Frankfort, September 8, 1815.

Friday morning, half-past 2 *o'clock.*

This is a letter worth having. Now will you rejoice that I am still here, good, dear August. Goethe was with me this morning at a quarter past ten. This is my diploma of nobility. But I behaved myself so badly, like

Æt. 44. 1815. one to whom the stroke of knighthood is given before all the world by the wise brave king whom he honours above all. I behaved very badly. I scarcely allowed Goethe to speak. It was like a prophecy when I wrote to you yesterday, that, while possessing the greatest taste, I was always myself appearing tasteless and ungraceful. And, again, I cannot help it. Twenty incidents, circumstances, joined hands to force me into it once more. Only listen. When yesterday, and the day before, no answer came from Goethe, under all outward activities the thought of it haunted me like a chronic disease (and here I must once more make to you this great declaration of my love: against my own secret wish, and only out of love and obedience to you, did I write to him at all). I was continually thinking he had not had the letter; or, *despite the impossibility*, he would rather even come than answer me by a single line; or that he had no messenger; and I felt convinced that whether he sent or came it would happen inopportunely, as always. But that it should all come as it did, a quarter before ten o'clock, was more than I could imagine. I had yesterday inflamed eyes, such as you know sometimes trouble me, and which were not improved by going to the play yesterday. When I awoke in the morning the redness had passed away, but I still had pain, and a feeling as though they were full of dust. In order to rest them, and not to read, I remained in bed—I usually rise early—breakfasted, and at last rose about nine o'clock. Toothbrush in hand, in a state of red powder, I stood in my dressing-room, when the landlord came up and said to Dora a gentleman wished to speak with me. I thought, a messenger from Goethe. I ask

who it is, and send Dora down; she returns with Goethe's card, and the message, he will wait a little. I let him come in, and wait only while I fasten on a dress, a black one, and so I appear before him, sacrificing myself that he may not wait a moment. This was all the sense I had left. I did not excuse myself to him, but said, "I thank you," supposing he would understand it to mean for coming to see me; also feeling that only he, not I, was to be thought of. This, alas, was the first impulse of my heart; now, in half comic, but intense self-torturing regret, I think otherwise. He said, with a somewhat Saxon, very flowing accent, that he regretted he had not known that I was at his house. I said, "We only wished to be sure that he had received the packet; it has been entrusted to a Vienna merchant, who took it as far as Leipsic." Æt. 44. 1815.

"I thank your husband, greet him many times for me. I had put it out carefully, in order to answer it at once; but, as so often happens with things that interest us the most, I have been hindered from doing so. I am greatly indebted to you."

"That I can quite understand; it is our common experience, I only wished to be quite sure that it was in your hands."

He wished over again to be remembered to you, and asked where you were. I told him how it had happened about my following you; about the congress, and the impression it had made upon me. About that he was very wise, looking at it as an affair done with two centuries before, and said it was not a thing to be recorded, as it had no form or outline. I told him my experience of war had been that it murdered, but did not devastate; that this

Æt. 44. 1815. was especially true of Frankfort, which we vied with each other in praising. He thought all would soon be over, and that we should reap the benefit. So full of faith in nature he was, so calm, cheerful, vague, and yet firm, that it was a perfect delight to me. He persuaded me to go to Bieberich, Wiesbaden, also to take this journey, and confessed that the part of Frankfort in which he lived was the best: he praised Heidelberg, that it was still princely. When I spoke of the unconquerable influence of place, he entirely agreed with me. *Darin mussen wir ja einmal leben, das thut sehrviel.* He asked where we intended to live. Altogether he was like the most aristocratic prince, like the most amiable man; easy, but dignified, and avoiding personalities. About you, somewhat curious and extremely polite. He went soon, before I could speak to him of Pereira, of Frau von Grotthuss, of anything! Only quite at first I said, "It was I who cried out after you at Niederrad. I had gone there with strangers only because it was the place about which you had written; I was too much startled." This he understood perfectly, and it was all right. I feel that on the whole I behaved as I did at Carlsbad, with eagerness and haste; not at all showing my own modest heart. But so it is if you see for a brief moment one to whom you have looked up with constant love, who has occupied your thoughts and your life. Also my conscious négligé, my feeling of ungracefulness oppressed me, and his hasty departure. It is, however, an astonishing event that he came. He sees no one; refused even to see the Princess Solms (the king's sister-in-law) with her new English husband. In short, I feel myself infinitely exalted in my humiliation, in my pitiful be-

haviour. Goethe has laid the sword of knighthood upon me. No Olympian deity could make me more honourable or show me greater honour. At first I thought of sending you his card, but I will not trust it to the post. After this you may as well know to the full how ridiculous I have made myself. As soon as he was gone I went and dressed elaborately, by way of compensation to myself! A handsome white dress, with collar to correspond, a lace bonnet and veil, the Moscow shawl! . . . I can now say to you, as Prince Louis once said to me, "Now, among your many brothers, I am worth ten thousand dollars more; Goethe has been with me." Æt. 44. 1815.

Adieu! your proud, humbled, vexed, faithful Rahel—wise in spite of folly.

It is with something like surprise that we see Rahel, with her strong love of country, her constant sympathy in its struggles, thus worshipping with unabated ardour at the feet of her idol. The indifference of Goethe to the fate of the country did not influence her to share that personal and political dislike felt by Schleiermacher and others of her Berlin friends. Börne gave characteristic expression to it some years later, when he wrote, "Since I have been able to feel, I have hated Goethe, and since I have been able to think, I have known why. It seems to me as though with Goethe the old German times are buried, and upon that very day freedom must be born anew."

Rahel settled for a time at Carlsruhe, Varnhagen being then *chargé d'affaires*. Among the many people who came and went, and whose society Rahel really enjoyed, was the young Grand-Duchess Stephanie of Baden, step-daughter

Æt. 44. 1815. to Napoleon. A charming and highly-cultivated girl, she had been the crown and pride of Madame Campan's educational work at Ecoue, and the latter was delighted to bring about a passing friendship with Rahel through the introduction of her son. Henri Campan, when recalled from Berlin before the war, had continued for some time to write dejected letters to Rahel. Paris was dull, life was empty, there was no society like hers: could she not come to live in Paris? The letters are remarkable for their grace and naiveté, as also for the patience with which they waited for rather scanty answers. Her marriage filled him with jealous indignation. M. Varnhagen might be all very well, he wrote in effect, but no man living was worthy to be the husband of Rahel. Campan was of delicate constitution, and died comparatively young, in 1821.

Rahel's outer life was at this time unsettled enough, and her health indifferent. Of her thoughts we obtain some glimpses in letters to her friend Ernestine G., to her sister Rosa, and to Count Custine.

To Rosa, in answer to a letter about the illness of one of her sons, and her own exhaustion from anxiety and the fatigue of nursing, after expressions of sympathy, and some practical advice, follows this characteristic passage:—

"At any rate you must make distraction for yourself, must go to places where new objects, new people, and words will rouse and refresh you in thought, nerve, and life. We women stand doubly in need of this. With men their occupations either are, or appear to them to be,

important matters of business, in the exercise of which their ambition is flattered, their desire of advancement stimulated, and their energies kept up by intercourse with other men. To us remain only the little affairs which are appended to theirs; isolated fragments, which drag us down. Those people are ignorant of human nature who maintain that we are constituted with minds so entirely different from men that we could, for example, find our lives fully occupied by a husband or a son. It could only be true if a woman had no higher thought in her whole soul than the requirements and claims of her husband, or the wishes of her children. Then *every* marriage, as such, must be the highest human condition. This, however, it is not. Undoubtedly we watch lovingly with careful solicitude the wishes of those dear to us, we make them our most urgent occupation; but it is not possible that they should at all times suffice us for work, for refreshment, for rest; not possible that they alone should strengthen us for further activity or nerve us for further endurance. This is the reason of what we call the frivolity of so many women. According to common-place conventionalities they have no fair standing ground; their foot must always be set down just where a man has planted or will plant his foot. They look out into the wide busy world as any one might do who was suddenly transformed into a tree rooted in the ground. Every wish, every effort to alleviate the unnaturalness of the condition, is called frivolity, and becomes conventionally culpable. So you and I must be refreshed sometimes! Varnhagen, the moment he had read your letter, forgot all the plans he had made with friends for the coming summer, and proposed at once that I

Æt. 45. 1816.

Æt. 45. 1815. should go to you when my health and the season would permit. I put the matter before him as it is, and he saw the whole directly. But to you, dearest Rosa, I must not talk about travelling. Why should I, seeing that it is only January, and there is some time yet before June comes.—Thine, R."

To Ernestine G., in Berlin.

Frankfort, Tuesday, May 21, 1816.

You are right, dear Golda, to write to me in the spring, when the "golden sun," and all the beauty we long for, oppresses you. My consolation for you is to point to what is worse; or, what is more effective, to glean out the best you can from your position. It is, after all, something to have higher desires and craving alive within us, to have some idea of what might make us happy. It is something when spring, with its changes of air and cloud, its brightening horizons, its gleams of sunshine and shade, can stir us even to pain; when they also call up the fairest pictures of life; when those aspirations, new and old, which nourish the heart, expand the soul, occupy the mind, become (even without the repose of enjoyment) a necessity, a condition of our whole individual existence. How must it be when such images no more come to us, neither in memory nor in the phantasies of the empty future? when our desires can no longer find the road on which to hurry forward, and can bring no clear plan out of the surrounding confusion; when the heart lies motionless, as though a gravestone were already upon our breast; when we belong to neither world, and have only the dull consciousness that nothing can ever be to us the same again; when we acquit

destiny (however much it has persecuted us, especially in trifles), are utterly weary, and only say, "It is enough." I give up everything then, I cannot control my faculties or desires; there is only one longing left, as for rest after torment. If this condition is reflected by the body, and if it, though without pain, puts that into a state of conflict, stirring every possibility of suffering, like the centre wheel placed by a cunning master,—then we know at last, "I am old, all is old; my whole youth was a torment, I have done with it." Is it not also just the same with life? Æt. 45. 1816.

I have lived through dreadful spring times, first many years ago, entirely through physical illness. . . . Even this year, when I last wrote to you, I was in a dreary state of mind, unable even to complain. Now I am much better again. I walk out, and do not suffer unnaturally from the changes in the weather. I feel more free, even cheerful in society. Over this changeableness I have no control, but I should be more generally sociable if the weather would improve, and if we were less exposed, through the slightness of the house, to sun and wind. But I have had my eyes opened, and know that I can never live in the country. A robust person may. It is all very well to wish to do it, delightful to live near long country rambles; and with good health it may be an easy duty to overlook what privations there may be, and a positive happiness to value all we possess, as much as though we had lost it! I walk with pleasure, I look out at the starry sky at night with pleasure, and feel—the feeling of health fails me most—that I really only need what is easily attainable.

Again, several weeks later, to the same friend:—

Æt. 45. 1816. "Only a few hasty words, dear Golda, to tell you that I received your last letter in Baden. I was occupied eight days with my arrangements at Carlsruhe, and have now been here a month with Dora, just to rest myself from my household troubles and from the bathing cure, which was not particularly successful; also to refresh myself among my friends, Frau von Schlegel, the Countess Custine, a French lady whom you do not know, and Frau von Humboldt, whom I have not seen for twelve years. The excellent little journey here, I accomplished quickly and pleasantly, and with the consoling consciousness that it was a treat to Varnhagen, who if he could would make the whole world one festival to me, and who knows how to express sympathy with every line which I receive. I should be quite willing to stay here; the weather also is favourable. I find pleasant intercourse with innumerable people of all classes. I have, however, had disagreeable experiences as well. Principally (and I will explain that presently) I am not well—that is, I walk, drive, dress, and even sleep, but in what misery do I awake; in short, I have not a sensation of health, and all my old sufferings seem aggravated. At the same time I am lively and full of spirits among my friends, and they say I look well. Some friends I have found changed, but the experience is not new and the pang discounted. I felt proud of the discovery, however, which is worth the journey, even if I had not had a thousand other enjoyments. A place in which one has lived with pleasant surroundings is always full of association. It is because I have found my inner self here, and am well supplied in all that is of the highest value to me, that I spoke of my health as the principal deficiency.

it now clear to you? I write all this, dear Golda, that you may appropriate to yourself in your intercourse with people my example, the example of a person for whom you show much regard; and, further, that you may not think it is always I who am to console you, but that you are to console me. We must not exact too much of mankind, they are all in a bad plight; full of inbred wrong, physically distorted and maimed, inheriting a nature which they have not gifts enough to understand and therefore to use; apart quite from the consideration of the general politico-social deficit. If they do not lie and boast, that is all that can be expected of them; they are always paining as well as misunderstanding each other, because their nature is empty, foolish, and tiresome, ourselves included in the number. We must not however overlook our obligation, but see to it carefully, as I consider I do at present in this letter. . . Tell Koreff I have been happy since yesterday, when the Countess Custine gave me the hope of seeing him on the Rhine in the winter. He will help me to do so I have no doubt. The countess also said he spoke of me with a kindly interest, which I fully reciprocate.—Thine, R." Æt. 45. 1816.

Count Astolf Custine was the son of a French nobleman, who was guillotined during the Revolution. The countess narrowly escaped the same fate, and during her imprisonment the boy of three years old fell into the keeping of a sans-culotte shoemaker, who used to carry the child out upon his arm to see the executions. The countess, with Astolf, and a devoted major-domo named Bärstecher, resided some years in Switzerland, recovered her property, and in 1814, in company with Dr. Koreff,

Æt. 45. 1816. went to Vienna, and remained there during the congress. Rahel then first made their acquaintance. His senior by many years, she took a maternal interest in the growth of his character, which was noble, original, and full of promise, and their friendship remained unaltered until her death. The one adjective which has commonly been applied to the letters of the Count, "sentimental," appears hardly borne out by the character of those which have been published. Many are distinguished rather by a graceful humour. It was perhaps his greatest misfortune to be a count. He had no obligation to decide anything, to become anything, and was full of contradictions. Loving at once society and solitude, luxury and asceticism, silent places and noisy crowds; entertaining at the same time tenets of Roman Catholicism and free thoughts enough to make him a very bad son of the Church; he was by inheritance and association a Royalist, whilst his better nature sympathised strongly with popular independence.

In Carlsruhe, Baden, and Frankfort his acquaintance with the Varnhagens was renewed. The countess became much attached to Rahel, and studied German, in order to read her favourite works. Their society was some compensation for the small and changing circle about her, and for Varnhagen's frequent absences on diplomatic affairs. Here is an unsentimental letter from the count.

Stuttgardt, March 15, 1816.

I never was less enchanted with any place than with Stuttgardt. It is not so stupid as Carlsruhe, because it is older, but otherwise not at all more amusing. The

country is neither plain, valley, nor mountain; it says nothing to me, and its toad-breeding gardens, with their pretentious pieces of water, and above all with their precautions for preventing a crowd where one scarcely sees an inhabitant, all make my stay as ridiculous as it is unsatisfactory. One does not know what to do. I spend my time in tormenting the police. I ask whither one of the garden roads leads? "Nulle-part," replies a gentleman in uniform; "do you think all the roads are meant to be walked upon?" I take another, but monsieur runs beside me, asking where I am going. "Nowhere," I say in my turn. "In that case you take this road, and return by the other, because it is not allowed to use the same road both ways. I warn you of it, as you appear to me to be a stranger." I was much tempted to break other laws of Wirtemberg, but I accomplished my walk in the best order, without committing any sin either of malice or of ignorance. I observe that the Catholic church is built in the form of a *cœur de garde*, which is suitable in a country where the police preach public morality, and spies are set for the admonition of strangers. . . . It is a ridiculous place, and I never go out in it without saying to myself, *Vivent* great monarchies and small republics, *vivent* the ancient capitals, *vive* the democracy of the Prater; but shun any place where they say *résidence* instead of capital. Æt. 45. 1816.

When the countess and her son returned to their chateau in Normandy it was to a life of great seclusion. The correspondence then becomes contemplative; Angelus Silesius and Lavater are read, and discussed at some length.

Æt. 45. 1816.

To Count Astolf Custine, in Fervaques.

Mon-en-droit, Tuesday, December 17, 1816.

Yesterday, dear Astolf, I spent in entire solitude. Madame Brede left me in the morning, in a perfect hurricane of the elements, not a creature has opened my door since. On either side of mine there are two rooms empty, all looking out over roofs only. Mine commands our court, and some out-buildings, across which I can see a wood called the pheasantry. I also look across a neighbour's garden, which still keeps its green ground despite the early snow, the driving rain, and devastating wind. It is quite in summer order, with variegated strips of salad and other vegetables. This garden with its bit of colour, and a few gleams of sunshine which I have seen flash out upon the tower and the wood beyond, are the only mental refreshment I have had since I came here. Such glimpses bind me to my former life, and this life itself is also a foreboding of the future, passing through the soul in hurried gleams, in flickering light and shade. I am reminded of those spiritual experiences once said to have been felt by Jacob Behmen at sight of a bright pewter plate. I first heard of it some years ago, and without surprise, as I have been conscious of the same thing. Speaking thus about my garden, it is a double pleasure to me to remember that you in Normandy, in your solitude, have a similar prospect, which must also give rise to feelings somewhat similar. And now not a word more about my abode, or my destiny and so forth! Of this at least I have become convinced during my long life, that destiny is stronger than we are, and there is nothing for it but to submit—silently. Our destiny is really nothing more

than our character; our character but the result of our active and passive being, the sum, the combination of all our capacities and gifts. This is in its deepest sense ourself. How is it to be altered? still more, how are we to alter it ourselves? Again, the exact epoch of time in which our personality falls is unalterable, it is a similar combination on a larger scale. The action and reaction of it upon ourselves we call destiny; in reality we do but look on, our activity is illusive; it is a grating against which we are for ever breaking our heads, because we see something through it; an invention of higher powers, to forward the development of our moral nature. Thus I explain it to myself, and can also easily understand the explanations which others arrive at, if only with fairness and honesty, because they must all in the end reach the same point, that of submitting to what we cannot understand. You also, dear friend, write me the same thing but in a different key: how instinctively one looks into the depths! But one cannot live only in them—they would kill me, were it not that I move in an atmosphere of brightness and repose, which is not my own or made by me. Æt. 45. 1816.

I am put into this life with all my faculties, and through them I feel after the deepest enjoyment of outward things, after intimate knowledge of existence, of the world—a world which is still given me of God, just as time is also an eternity, and already a future. I could not leave this world or anything in it without pain. If I am here as a penance, it is that also; but I will not retract my assertion that it is *possible* to live on here. After all, there is a broad

Æt. 45. 1816. possibility for life to be made successful. There are not a few men who have succeeded in living—not in *letting live*—of whom we know, or hear, or care nothing. The mere possibility is worth having. Gifts well harmonised (such as I once described to you about ourselves) in sympathetic relation to external circumstances are necessary for it; also climate, parents, country. How is it, for instance, that I have earned the happiness, such as I before referred to, despite those doubts and questions which we cannot answer, which I never weakly stifle, of an inward peace as though I also ruled? Such a feeling I brought with me into the world; it is part of my inheritance. Why should we not come hither with such precious gifts in our hand? I believe in no caprices of the infinite creative Spirit. Everywhere there is eternal development—grief, knowledge, growth, enjoyment, from which depths of hell as well as heights of paradise can at any time be the result. Do we not bear all this in each immortal soul? Our experience may be boundless, no poor bulwarks of our own can avail us. You see that when I begin to write I do not know when to leave off! This is what I call saying no more about destiny! Only three pages!

Adieu. Now I must write to Frau von Schlegel. You must not take offence at silence after all this talk. Those at Fervaques have my faithful love and friendship for life. I enjoyed your letter thoroughly—send me more. Does William write? Does your mother paint? Is she well? Will she come to Carlsbad? R.

CUSTINE TO RAHEL. Æt. 45. 1816.

Fervaques, December 24, 1816.

. . . Come, come and see us. Come at once. I must fetch you to take our journey to Bohemia. Leave *votre endroit* and come and repose your eyes upon our green meadows, if you are not afraid at the prospect of a life like ours with so little external movement. I tell you this that you may prepare your mind, and not be dull when you come to us. The day of your arrival would be quite a festival for us; then perhaps we could all leave here together for Paris. Look, think, and decide. For myself I have such confidence in your friendship that I think already you are here. Try solitude with us; it is a study worth making. You will see how great we grow, when we compare ourselves only with ourselves. The uselessness of the mind, of the active talent, which we feel and have felt before, gives one a really grand idea of the prodigality of the Creator. These gifts are all luxuries; we do not use them. It is impossible to help feeling that we are not created for this world, but for some other and ultimate purpose.

I have not yet spoken to you of our society, because at this season, when nobody leaves Paris, it is limited to an old friend who has lived with us for twelve years. A remnant of the eighteenth century and its philosophy. A moral as well as physical ossification, he is a match seen through a microscope. As I think, in listening to him, of the famous men of his time, of the friends of his youth, Diderot, d'Alembert, Marmontel, and others, I seem to see a table dismantled after a feast, and a gnawed bone

Æt. 45. 1816. thrown to a dog as the room is rearranged. It is a hideous illustration, I should not dare to send it to any one but you; but you are not one of those who mistake truth for malice, therefore I can tell you quite simply what I see. This friend grew old in the house of my grandmother, to whom he was abbé. The Revolution withered him up without distressing him, because his soul was not strong enough to feel a real grief. He is not by any means bad, but he is subject to fear. One hardly knows whether to be most astonished at his small external movement or at his profound immobility. Most spiritual truths are strangers to him, and those ideas which he does accidentally receive, crystallise at once in his head. He has the air of having overcome life, and I always take him for a part of the furniture of the house, condemned for eighty years by a sorcerer to assume human shape. He may be the soul of the chateau, of the room, of the arm-chair, but not of any human body. When you come you will see this curiosity. He is the Prince Trautmansdorff of Fervaques. . . . But now adieu. My thoughts to-day are not suited to a letter, therefore this has neither shape nor limit. But in thinking of you I feel how my heart is made for friendship.

Again to Count Custine, after sending to him certain extracts out of Lavater's works.

January, 1817.

Those passages, dear Astolf, which are marked in these extracts please me the best, but I have copied the whole to preserve the connection. What he says further upon the same subject is new to me, and will please you

greatly. After your letter I can now reply to both; that I do not understand how one can produce a certain condition of soul by caprice of will or by special effort. There is only one good thing in the world which can be compelled, only one thing that remains good when it is compelled—doing right. It is the only thing, with me at least, that can be forced. And certainly not prayer *through* prayer. This outpouring of the soul, freed from all thought, from such fetters of present existence as would mar the intimate communion of the spirit with God, a communion of rapture or of grief. Every thought hinders prayer, unless it be itself a prayer, escaped, as it were, from another region of our soul. Or have you the supernatural gift—power, faculty—to will something that is beyond, a mere link between us and the Highest? Our present imprisonment, apprenticeship, fritters away such gifts in the course of, and apparently through the action of, time; but is not the one as precious as the other, equally wonderful and terrible? When we think, can we not also pray? do we therefore commune less closely with the Highest Intelligence? Is it not the same thing to ask of God as to pray to Him, though in the latter, perhaps, there is more of conscious blessedness? Is my thought of God to be still that of a child when I am one no longer—a thought of perpetual hallelujahs? I must understand Him better, through knowledge, through work, through emotion. I must become one with Him, ever more and more. When our active faculties fail, our intelligence is insufficient, and there is no voice to answer, to enlighten, to still our hearts, then we prostrate our soul in prayer. A new being, a fresh power

Æt. 45. 1816.

Æt. 45. 1816. rises within us and bears us onward. . . . Every thought of God is prayer. Holy, true, and honest purposes are prayer. Earnest thought, search without vanity is prayer. I must ever pray until God enlightens me, brings me nearer to Him. Why does He let us ask so often? Perhaps because prayer is in itself an independent work, an active progress; so also is thought, and must be equally acceptable to God.

Perhaps it is childish of me, but I cannot conceal such thoughts from those who know me best. I like to speak of God as of One who in wisdom and in love cares for all our affairs. We are constrained to accept a superior, lofty intelligence, comprehending all things; our human hearts, blind to the light of earth, thrilling at once with joy and anguish, feel for the loving hand of a Father. Because we cannot comprehend Him, and because He is infinitely above us, where our intelligence does follow, we judge His work by our standard. The highest which He has given us is intellect and goodness, a little individuality and a broad sympathy with the individuality of others. This God has given us, and at either end rapture and despair, at either end one thought—absorbing ecstacy—prayer. . . .

You know well, dear Astolf, who thus writes to you. I am impelled to do so by what you have written to me of your inmost convictions. One word more. What a man does in earnest, what calms, elevates, strengthens him, is all right, only his inner and his outer life must work together; his superficial interests and inclinations must refer themselves to his deeper convictions. Then all is well, and he becomes a true image of God, and not a travesty.

But I ought also to answer your first letter, which was delightful, and read by us amid great applause, for I could not help reading passages out to Varnhagen — where you describe the castle, the abbé, and your mother's life in a few words, and Bärstecher is exhaustively hit off with one! I wonder if other Frenchmen who do not know German can write thus! I do not mean that German gives eyes, force, vigour, choice of words, but I doubt whether without it you would have employed certain turns of expression. I hear sometimes from another Frenchman, a son of Madame Campan, whom I first knew in Berlin in 1806. His letters are admirable, inexpressibly naïve and true; he does not know the meaning of "Ja!" It is not your style, nor that of orthodox book-writing, but is nevertheless perfect French. The Humboldts went to their estates at Erfurt on the 11th; in February they go to Berlin, thence to London. The daughters will go to Naples, and I have permission from Varnhagen to accompany them. I said "No." On the other hand I do hope in the course of the summer to see the Custines! I have just received a charming letter from Dorothea Schlegel; she is very dear to me. Yesterday in a comic opera, "The Sisters of Prague," I heard Häser, a singer from Stuttgardt. He is a capital bass, but in one scene sang soprano as a grandly-dressed lady. He did it to perfection, so perfectly that he overcame the ludicrous, and made us think all men should sing in the same way. I applauded rapturously everything, recitative, action, scenery, all! Æt. 45. 1816.

I shall write next time to your mother; kiss her hand for me. Translate to her what you can from my letters.

R.

Æt. 47. 1818.

TO COUNT ASTOLF CUSTINE, IN FERVAQUES.

Carlsruhe, Sunday, November 1, 1818.

Weather, dull, wet, cold.

I returned just a month ago from Baden. The weather had been exquisite for a few days before I left, lovely alternations suggesting active thought and pensive dreams. For the last six weeks we had scarcely any society; only Frau von Tettenborn was living at the castle. I was always wishing for my friends, now one, now the other; but our days are put before us as we put food before a horse. We cannot alter the mode or measure, can at best only leave our food untasted. And unless some great event comes I do not care to look round me.

For the last day or two I have been occupying myself with this thought about death. I have seemed to realise how suddenly we shall be relieved from all the outward circumstances of life and their thousand hindrances—how well we shall feel. To my impetuous spirit, the constraint, the jostling, the contradiction, is so ignoble and lasts so long. What then shall I say to you of my life? I sit and wait: if a good seed falls to me, I take it, I eat it with appreciative appetite! So I have been able to accept and understand the life appointed me well enough! Now let me ask about yours. You have been acting plays, in the country in the summer time: how delightful! Especially if the people are agreeable and can act tolerably. Did your mother join, and Bärstecher also? You must be now getting to know your province and your neighbourhood, and this means that you become attached to it. The fragments of life that surround us are never simple, but

composed of what is acceptable and what is worthless. Æt. 47. 1818.
As we finish with successive intervals and have sifted the unpleasant proportion, we find what remains pretty much alike, until all at once we come upon one which brings us thorough enjoyment of heart, of nature, or of art. This only is life, the rest but the framework. This brings me at once to literature, since all our enjoyments are now reduced to "black upon white!" Do you know, *Recueil de lettres sur la peinture, la sculpture, et l'architecture, ecrites par les plus grands maitres du quinzième jusqu'au dixhuitième siècle, traduit par* L. J. Jay? I brighten my present days with letters of Michael Angelo, of Annibal Carracci, as the people of other days. Their foibles are removed into the distance, their main object, their activity, their desires, heart, soul, all stand out clear, and in these letters one comes to know the real men. Such a collection of letters teaches us far more than any celebrated historian. I could say a good deal about historical writing, which is mostly very bad.

Have you read Bignon's pamphlet on the Bavarian claims to Baden? Cosmopolitan Germans are indebted to him, and sound his praises. Have you read Bailleul upon Frau von Staël's last book? I wish she was alive to enjoy such incense. People attribute to her gifts which she did not possess; they give her credit for mind, penetration, which is impossible without thoroughness: she had a mind which could only thus flicker in its want of depth. She played with many important subjects which were not matters of experience, only of intellectual appropriation: even vanity is an intellectual growth. But I am glad that intellect in general exerts this influence (in German we say, 'This field will yield well this year"), forcing attention

Æt. 47. 1818. thus from literary opponents. It says something for French culture, which I have always upheld and to which I am much indebted. You know that personally I liked Madame de Staël better than did most; better than that common herd, stupid to the heart's core, and too lazy to form an opinion, who believed and told the most contradictory things of her. But in her books I always found a disconnected character, no harmony to bring out *das geniale;* not soft in fervour, not calm in judgment and thought; not warm, though often burning, and in her criticism far removed from spontaneous artistic appreciation. Her gifts, in short, were out of harmony with each other, and especially with her own feeling and judgment of herself—thus she lacks the keystone of an artist-nature.

As there is a place open in Paris where they have all the German periodicals (so I read in the "Morgenblatt)," ask for "Dohm's Memoirs," for "The Good Women," prose tales, for "The Excited," a political drama in Goethe's new edition, vol. xiv. Ask also for "Rhine and Maine;" three sheets are out. If you find out Oelsner, he knows everything, and can be of great service to you.

You said one atrocious thing in your last letter. "Because, in spite of all pride of reasoning, it is always what we do which ends by regulating what we think." To set this up as a truth opens the door to every crime. What we do does not regulate what we think, it only furnishes us with material upon which to work. *How* we mean to do anything is optional with us, and that is the moral point which is especially ours. Goethe says, "Only man can choose and judge, all other animals upon the earth move and feed in dark sensuous enjoyment." If you are beginning to

understand *le positif de la vie* I am delighted. This *positif*, this actual existence, consists in living thoroughly out what is immediately before us; we are, therefore, always surrounded by the *positif*, that is, if we have free, full use of our faculties. It surrounds us alike at a country seat or in Paris, in society or in the family circle, among men or animals, even alone among books. To feel the present, to occupy oneself fully with it, is the talent of living. The more one has of it the stronger becomes one's sense of the actual and one's power of adapting it. A pure moral will can light up many matters for us; of that I am certain. The spirit is like the sun, but it can only animate what already exists. Remember me to Oelsner, and tell him what I say about Madame de Staël: he understands me in these things. If possible, I will send you the Tauler in December through Count M. R. Æt. 47· 1818.

Count Custine became engaged to a rich heiress in Paris. After a time, however, he resolutely broke off the engagement, which probably had been arranged in the French manner by the parents of the young people. Before long he made a choice of his own, and was happily married. This happiness however was of short duration; his wife died, and very soon afterwards his infant son also.

CUSTINE TO RAHEL.

Paris, May 12.

Fine spring weather, about which we have no doubt in our carpeted rooms, lighted and warmed as in winter.

I appear like a monster, but am only idle; too idle to think, for everything frightens me. My mind and imagi-

Æt. 47. 1818. nation lose themselves in the pursuit of a sort of security which the distraction of the world constantly removes farther away. I have gone through great troubles, all that remains is a profound apathy combined with an uneasy dread of the future, a sadness from the past, which nevertheless does not cure that frivolity which is the cause of all the good and all the evil of my life. I write books which are not published, I begin others that are never finished. I make poems, translations, and yet do nothing, because the *equivalents* are nothing but proofs of unhappiness. I am in constant need of a person like yourself to electrify my thought.

I have an intimate friend, with whom I have learned English and travelled in Scotland. I have a lovely son, to whom my mother has also become mother. She is devoted to him, and we all go together into Normandy for some months. . . . You have delighted me with the sentences from Angelus. I will tell you all that I think about them some day when they will be more worth having than to-day. Meanwhile, rest assured that you have true and good friends here, to whom it would be the greatest happiness to see you again. You would enjoy yourself here, and would give us a pleasure of which we are worthy, since we think constantly of you, and always speak of you when struck by anything that is sad or lively, if only picturesque.

Adieu. I am much changed, but not for you.

The death of this grandson, to whom she was devoted, so preyed upon the spirits of Madame Custine, that she slowly sank under the trouble, and died in Switzerland. The count spent some years in travel and in dilettante

authorship. He wrote a novel called "Aloys," supposed to be an elucidation of the mystery of the engagement which he had broken off some years before. This he brought with him to Berlin in 1829. After spending some time in hunting out Rahel, whose letters he had missed or lost, he sent her a note, entreating to see her. The note was brought back with the message that upon that morning she had left Berlin. He sent her the book afterwards, with the petition not to lend it to her friends, but to make them buy it, because "in Paris the value of literature is calculated by the precise number of the copies which are sold of a book." Æt. 47. 1818.

CHAPTER X.

Therefore, though few may praise, or help, or heed us,
Let us work on with head, or heart, or hand,
For that we know the future ages need us;
And we must help our time to take its stand.

* * * * *

Each single struggle hath its far vibration,
Working results that work results again;
Failure and death are no annihilation,
Our tears exhaled will make some future rain.

R. A. VAUGHAN.

IN 1819 the Varnhagens again settled in Berlin. The whole aspect of the capital was changed. Rahel came back to feel the pain of many a vacant place, of silence where of old there had been welcome. But among those who remained were Schleiermacher and his wife, unchanged, genial as ever. Henriette Herz also soon afterwards returned from a prolonged absence. During the war in 1813 she had been in Vienna with Dorothea Schlegel and Baroness Arnstein. Her faculty of organisation had done good service in those hospitals rapidly established on the left bank of the Danube, under the supervision of her friend Dr. Reil. After such privation, fatigue, and anxiety as necessarily came upon her, as well as others, during those unsettled times, she sought an interval of repose in Rome. There she found all that she could wish. Her

familiarity with the language of the country, her historical and artistic culture, all fitted her for thorough enjoyment of the congenial surroundings of the great city. In addition, also, she had abundance of that free intelligent society which had become a necessity to her. She was almost as fond of conversation as the French lady who said she had no fear of death, *Parcequ' elle allait causer avec ses amis dans l'autre monde.* In the unpretending rooms of Henriette Herz were gathered all the somewhat exclusive German colony at that time settled in Rome. The presence of Niebuhr, Bunsen, W. Humboldt, gave to it a certain character of solidity; but the lighter element was perhaps sufficiently supplied by the young Crown Prince Louis of Bavaria, by Thorwaldsen, and those rising artists who were supposed to be busily establishing a new era in art. 1820–30.

Returning home through Germany, Henriette Herz turned aside here and there to see old friends, with a fidelity of friendship which was one of her many excellences. In Stuttgardt, at the house of Cotta, she again met Jean Paul, whom she had not seen since his visit to Berlin many years before. She had then been annoyed at his manifest awe of her as a learned woman, a title to which she did not aspire. He wrote of the pair as "the famous Herz, with his stately and learned wife." The years had told, though differently, upon them both. Jean Paul found her become thinner as well as older, while she mourned over his transformation into a "stout, florid bourgeois, and altogether unpoetical person."

In Frankfort Henriette Herz once more met with Louis Börne. During the troubles of the war and her absence

1820–30. in Italy their correspondence had been interrupted. To her, therefore, it was a new and startling revelation to find that "lazy man," with his failing health and ardent brain, already a thorn in the side of Metternich. She read with eager interest the obnoxious articles by which he was stirring up the politicians and the people of Germany from the lethargy which had again fallen upon them. A few years later, in his famous "Letters from Paris," he attained to his highest reputation as a brilliant political writer. In them he mirrors not only the passing thought and life of the Parisian world, but also illumines by the scintillations of his wit his own many inconsistencies, his love for his country and contempt for his countrymen, his plebeian sympathies, his aristocratic weaknesses. He appears a democrat, delighting in frilled linen and Paris gloves; a hater of ruling powers, and an admirer of Henri IV. and Frederick the Great; a man who felt like a German, who thought and wrote like a Frenchman. Henriette Herz, in writing of Börne, well discerns the essential difference between him and Heine: "With Börne a deep earnestness underlies all he wrote, however harsh and flippant its outward expression, while with Heine just the opposite is true: he affects seriousness as a foil to his wit, and is always ashamed to be really in earnest."

To Henriette Herz, as to Rahel, the succeeding years surpassed each other in social dulness and in political disappointment. Both, however, struggled manfully against the impending stagnation. In contradiction to conventional ideas, Henriette Herz had at her marriage looked upon her education as just begun, rather than as

just concluded. Hence her habit of self-culture extended through her most vigorous years on into a bright old age, keeping her own mind in health, and benefiting all who came under its robust influence. She prosecuted her favourite study of languages for her own pleasure, and also in order to resume her practice of giving gratuitous lessons to young girls in needy circumstances. When they had made sufficient progress, she busied herself to find suitable situations in which they might earn an independence. She also translated into German the "Travels of Mungo Park." Her leisure hours she occupied in needlework of various kinds, all devoted to benevolent uses. The "enthusiasm of humanity," which she had cultivated in her youth, animated her mature life and made fruitful those declining years which so commonly are wasted in a supine selfishness. Upon the death of her mother, and before her journey into Italy, Henriette Herz had renounced Judaism. Schleiermacher urged her to a public profession of Christianity, but such a step was contrary to her opinions and repulsive to her taste. Her firm refusal caused the first coolness which had ever interrupted her friendship with Schleiermacher. She retired for several weeks to the house of a clergyman in a village near Berlin, and was there received into the Christian communion. The very narrow income of Henriette Herz was increased through a pension granted by the king, at the request of Alexander von Humboldt. 1820–30.

Rahel was, from her position as Varnhagen's wife, less mistress of her own time, and by degrees became a good deal absorbed in such society as survived in Berlin. Upon the whole it appears to have involved less of pleasure than

1820–30. of irritation. She writes very freely about it to our old acquaintance, Baron Brinckmann.

To Gustav von Brinckmann, at Stockholm.

Berlin, Tuesday, November 30, 1819.

12 *o'clock, clear frosty weather.*

Youthful, dear, and faithful Friend,—Those are the true friends who remain young, even grow younger, as you do. I am glad for myself also to have made acquaintance with age not altogether after the fashion which I have usually observed. I find I have still the same inclinations, more or less the same views and opinions, the same incurable weaknesses, the same power and impotence, but with all this more apprehension of the reason of things, and a richer storehouse of thought. I hold it to be one of the duties of life to keep this storehouse more and more in connected order, to make it increasingly full, perfect, and true. This I believe, because I see most clearly that without it I should accomplish nothing. In some respects, therefore, I feel as I did at fourteen or at sixteen. Only a fatal blow or two have fallen upon me in my later years. The same is probably true of any one who thinks, and has really *lived* from fourteen to thirty. One thing is dead in me, that is the possibility of making the least effort for my own happiness or pleasure. Of course one has to prepare for the days as they come in due order, and compel me, like the rest of the world, to do both the disagreeable and the impossible! But how do I do it? With vexation and wrath, with profound contempt and disregard for the whole social

condition; piece-meal, with great gaps, which I applaud 1820-30.
myself for leaving! It is to me the most despicable thing to lose and waste the thread of one's life in mere circumstance. I despise, too, the increasing exactions of life. . . . One thing is dead and uprooted within me, that any human being henceforth is absolutely necessary to me; that loss could again prostrate my whole nature, as of old. It is a great change, therefore, of which I have become conscious, that I now grow more attached to places than to people. To speak plainly, locality depresses or exalts me more readily than persons. So long as they are straightforward folks, such as one has frequently found since the war, without pretence or pedantry, allowing one to be mistress in one's own drawing-room, and not robbing one recklessly of time, I am content with them. Whether I must renounce this thing or that it is the same to me, since there must be limitations.

Standing face to face with you, dear Brinckmann, and your letters, your youthful tender appreciation of the past, I felt at first ashamed and constrained to a humiliating confession of my own state of mind. But I am not ashamed of myself. After thus gathering myself together, I am content to find that I have been right. I never was foolish enough to make any promises about what I would grow to, any more than I should think of thus binding another.

After this conscientious report of myself, you will not be surprised to hear that Berlin, after an absence of six years, does not enchant me. Death, upheld by war, has made great havoc among those friends whom your description shows to have been deeply engraved upon your

1820-30. memory. In every corner of our quarter, where we used to see our dear ones, are now strangers. They are all tombstones. Scattered like dust is that whole constellation of beauty, grace, coquetry, wit, preference, cordiality, pleasantry, unrestrained intercourse, earnest purpose, and spiritual development. Every house is becoming a shop; every social meeting a *dîné* or an *assemblée;* every discussion—you see from my erasure that I am at a loss for a word—a commonplace confusion of ideas. Everybody is wise, and has bought his wisdom at the nearest market. There is an astounding number of clever people here, with just a remaining shred of sociability — like Germany. But few of mine remain. Those who are still here are grown old; the children have become ladies and gentlemen. In short, it is not a comfortable thing to come home after a long absence. One does not feel at home even from a material point of view. Still you are not for a moment to imagine that I am discontented or unhappy. When tolerably well I am very cheerful, always lively, and so people endure me. I am perfectly calm, and ready for enjoyment, only it must come to me. I cannot seek it any more than I can dance like Madame Vestris. It would be delightful, but I cannot do it.

Now I am going to conjure up spirits for you in telling you of two evenings. We are occupying just now *chambre garnie*, No. 20, French Street, at the corner of Frederick Street. I see Madame Unzelmann's house from my windows. Last evening were here at tea, Frau von Crayen, with Fraülein Victoire; Madlle. Maas, who played here and left again on Wednesday; the husband, or rather widower of Barnime Finkenstein; Schutz, who has

written "Lacrimas," and now "Charles the Bold," and on 1820–30.
political matters. A gentle refined man, a friend of F. Schlegel, and going on his account to Vienna. I could tell you more of him by word of mouth. Further, Pitt Arnim, —Achim's brother, who has seen you—Varnhagen and I. The evening was lively, merry, very good; but for me too long, I cannot now bear any continued strain. To-night we go to Madame Herz—with? Fraulein von Imhoff,— the sister of Lesbos—and others. Are they not spirits? . . . This morning Mad. Liman was here, and I delivered your message: her conscience troubles her that she has not written. I also have been prevented for some time past, but your repeated and flattering letter yesterday gave me such a turn, that I said at once to Varnhagen, to-morrow morning not a soul shall be admitted, and I will write to Brinckmann. Do you know that your letters always seem to call out some expression of his affection toward me? With heightened colour and glistening eye he gave me a long silent kiss with your letter in his hand. He is born for friendship, as you are! A man needs a companion in order to assure himself of paradise; this necessity is a part of our inheritance. What others see with us doubles its value, and also our love. That is the best greeting which I can give you from Varnhagen! He thinks you could and should come here, or else in the summer to the south of Germany. You shall have my picture. But can you not, seriously, arrange a meeting? If you would buy a million less books you would have money enough, and permission from the king is easily obtained. Say that you must see me!

Do you know that Frau von Humboldt is here? I saw

1820–30. her a few days ago, but as we both suffered from coughs we did not get much out of each other! Apropos, I ought to have mentioned to you among the deaths that several of our friends have become ministers of state—the same thing you know. . . . Farewell, true and faithful friend. Rest assured in my friendship. What a pity it is there is nothing, not even books, to write about now. What do you say to the music? to the letters in the *Constitutionel*, to old Voss, to Perthes? Do you read it all? Adieu.

Write to me through Mendelssohn: if the letter be thick I will pay it. The lady about whom you wrote to me in March, who learnt German behind your back, is Minerva herself. Here I poured ink over six lines instead of sand. Varnhagen is repairing the damage! This is another feature to add to the picture of my age, I grow heedless as I grow in years. Adieu! adieu!

In spite however of Rahel's complaints, the suite of rooms in the aristocratic house in the Mauerstrasse received their almost daily complement of visitors. These reception rooms were still characterised by an old-world simplicity. There were no redundant articles of furniture. Rahel's writing-table; Varnhagen's cabinets of precious autographs and other literary curiosities; the bookcases, containing well-used volumes side by side with presentation copies from aspiring authors; the piano, and the very chairs, all had the homely look of old-established friends.

A few extracts from letters during this decade will best give its inner history.

1820–30.

TO FRAU VON R., IN ROME.

Berlin, June 9, 1820.

Where we have been, and still wait, since last October.

This letter brings a thousand countless greetings to you, loved and honoured friend! May it express to you all my longing for your society, for quiet, cheerful, undisturbed communion with you; the only bearable or desirable intercourse, that which is inspired by heart, intellect, wit, good humour, consideration, truth, and unpretending fidelity. This I found in *your* family, and no one can appreciate, no one miss it more keenly than I do. All this I am impelled to say to you, just as a lover must disclose his sweet wounds. Soon after the hard blow of your departure, on July 22nd, I found that I also could not remain to await you in Carlsruhe. Under the increasing pain of this blow I felt more strongly every day all that I had lost, the impulse to activity was gone: a most enjoyable life ended. To the new one here I could not fit myself again; it was strange, and the cold climate uncongenial. Because I might not remain I felt unsettled, in short, uncomfortable and haunted by regrets and souvenirs. I did not intend to write to you until I could do so in a better mood, or, at least, of something definite. In vain—the congress kept everything in uncertainty and does so still—merely that I may not know even by the middle of the summer whither we are to go, and must waste it here. Still, just now it is very beautiful here. The town is full of flowers and abundant foliage, and the passing rain has laid the dust. Even in winter I must do the place justice. As far as social intercourse

1820–30. is concerned, it is certainly the richest and most varied town in Germany. Nowhere out of Paris will you find so many women who receive guests, and rarely anywhere find people make greater effort to be and to know something, despite the general social disorganisation which is felt here as elsewhere. . . .

I have hired my little quarters in Baden-Baden from the 20th, and think of going there to rest. Then I shall see whether to sell my furniture in Carlsruhe, or to send it away into the neighbourhood. In any case I must be there. Frau von Humboldt has been for fourteen days in Dresden, and is going to her estate, Burgörner. She loves you much, and I hear of you through her, also through the Hofräthinn Herz, who corresponds with Frau von Schlegel (who found my R., as I said), and is her guardian angel. Triumph, for me! My compliments are all true. That is the defence; you know me; can I flatter? Frau von Tr. I saw at a ball, younger, more cheerful, and more beautiful than ever, and dancing like the youngest miss. She seemed calm, happy, and very pleased. I addressed her as a friend of Henriette, and spoke to her of you. I felt I must do so. The dear, bright, harmonious Henriette had complained about your correspondence! She was somewhat distracted, as one may be at a ball.

You are all of you now talking Italian like professors or lazzaroni; Fraulein G. sings like Caffarelli; papa has read, examined, and learned by heart the Vatican library; in short, Italy is to you caught and trapped. And yet every evening you have Germany with you! I can see it now: needlework, baskets, embroidery, drawings in the young

ladies' room, just as in Carlsruhe, flowers and all! Herr 1820–30.
von R. is surrounded by parchments and piled-up books, with dark bindings and such Italian characters that he is the only person in the house who can read them. When it is too hot out in the terrace he gets up a game at whist and brings out his German trick in the evening. Ah! I like to picture it all to myself! We shall yet live together in the same town. Is it the intense wish? Is it presentiment? So it seems to me. I embrace you heartily, dear, honoured friend! You, dearest Frau von R. and Fr. Henriette, and Fr. Elise.

To Ludwig Robert, in Carlsruhe.

Saturday, February 9, 1822.

Midday. Dusky, after the most divine spring I ever enjoyed.

To-day, only one word, and that is, "Now my work has not been for nought." (Read the last number of "Kunst und Alterthum;" "Appreciation of the Wanderjahren.") I have the Black Eagle order of Frederick the Great. It covers my fully rewarded heart. It is made with tears, which I have wept and suppressed, of all that I have lived, suffered, enjoyed, the evil and the good. My life has reached its destination. That this man (Goethe) should thus experience that his contemporaries acknowledge, study, comprehend, idolize, love him with sincerity, is the summit of all my earthly desire and effort. This most perfect man, this representative man, including all others and making them plain to us. This priest, this ambassador, now says with satisfaction that he is understood; that is, loved, loved with a love which only he

1820–30. could excite. This I have helped forward. I, a ball in the hand of Providence—Madame Guyon says she is that—and of this happiness I am proud; that is, I rejoice over it, and God also rejoices. That this triumph proceeds from Berlin is especially gratifying, because Goethe was badly treated by Berlin, and because it is the best German town, and because I am eternally grateful to Frederick the Second! So we three, you, Rike, and I, embrace here, in this letter. Adieu.

To Henry Steffens, in Breslau.

Berlin, September 6, 1825.

Cool, rainy weather, after exhausting drought. Midday.

Dear Child,—For thus you must still be addressed, even if you have received your true title and are made Excellence. How free, how fair is your improvisation on "letter-writing," so truly Steffens-like. Into what a lovely soul do you let us look; what a "Wandering" you have before you. Upon such an one every apprentice would become a master. With a genuine man, every little bit of torment brings to light something good. I know the sorrow which created that letter for me; you had had a taste before you began it. Now it is there, I adore it with other created things, and moreover imagine that I appreciate and honour it; for inasmuch as I love with my whole strength, I cannot realise anything above this strength and these powers. But I beseech you, never write to me only because you think you must write to me. I know there will come a time, because you know me, when you will wish to see me, then you will speak; never

pay me a visit because you owe me one. You write to me 1820–30.
also, when you write books. I tearfully thank great men of the past for the foundation they laid, and for their legacy of treasures, as letters to me! *Es winken sich die Weisen aller Zeiten;* and that I recognise and love them extravagantly, is the blessing, the dower which I enjoy. I never forget it; as little as I should forget if I were a beauty. But I also am so circumstanced to-day as only to write as best I may. Otherwise you would have to beware of the torrent of my loquacity. I have been in Weimar, Frankfort, Baden, Heidelberg, Strasburg; have seen Goethe, Voss, Mdlle. Mars, the French actress, and heard the much improved singer Wild; have seen mountain and valley, tree and meadow, forest, cloud, sunshine; greeted the sun in all kinds of activity, plants of all kinds, the precious corn, the vigorous hemp; have smelt every sort of air, watched a storm on the Rhine, looked at rivulets, waterfalls, rocky paths, forests, chestnut trees, everything. What would Steffens say to all this? I asked daily. Is that a letter? I could tell you wonders of all these things with the tongue or with the pen. But I am still suffering from an attack in the eyes, which began on Sunday; for three quarters of an hour everything seemed like moving silver wheels; I could only distinguish colour, no form. Still I go out, and hope to hear Mdlle. Sontag in a concert to-night; but I feel like *die Jungfrau*, "This is not my choice." I should prefer keeping sheep. Madame Beer is in love with Mdlle. Sontag, and a little so with me; so she takes me with her. The last news of our Willisen I heard from Baden, where he saw much of my brother Ludwig and his handsome wife. They

1820–30. drove out with him and Count Yorck, whom they praise much; also Willisen, for his cheerful and sympathetic character. A man must travel, "then he will be abreast of the world." The "man" is right, only abroad is he his real self. At home he must always represent his past, and that in the present becomes a mask; a heavy one to carry, and a concealment to the face. Dear Frau Von Steffens do not be ashamed of me; take me as I am, and do not call me *geistreich*. Let me be living and lively, let me embrace you and Clara, and show you my fidelity, then must I thank you.

To Ludwig Robert, in Baden.

Berlin, August 13, 1827.
Monday, stormy weather. Read this alone.

Now I shall see if you really are my friend, if all be true that we have lived through together. It was a death-blow to me when you wrote in the spring that you would not come here in the winter. But now you will come, my dearest Robertchen! I have two hundred thalers in a bag, upon which is written that they belong to you. You and I alone know of this sum. I have laid it by, little by little, in order for once in my life to have a personal gratification. The time for it has now arrived. You must come this winter. Two hundred thalers will be twenty each month for ten months. So there you have an income. . . . Rike is to know nothing of the money. I could perfectly well tell August about it, but I will not. I should not like him to know that I have money apart from him; he will think I am a millionaire, that I have endless resources, and so will forget to practise economy.

That I should give it to you would delight him. Or shall I buy shawls and gold chains with it? I always give much away, and so gather happiness instead of pleasure. You will write that you have received unexpected remittances, and will come this winter. You will put up at a good hotel near us until you can hire rooms, or I will hire them if you like. You will always dine with me, of course. Make me happy! How long have we to live, and what is likely to happen to us in the way of brilliant happiness? Is not Markus dead? If, out of madness, you do not accept the money, return it at New Year. I shall take it. Now I shall prove if it be true that you would be generous to me if you could, if you are a true Louis. Answer at once. In the spring I will travel with you where you like. Farewell, and make me happy. 1820–30.

TO THE SAME.

Thursday, August 16, 1827.

Warm, close, thunder weather, with sunshine and small clouds.

I am now much hindered and disturbed. Every day the same, so that I cannot even keep my accounts. All sorts of strangers, travellers, the Countess Henckel with daughter and sister, the Barnekows, Count Yorck, Willisen, Hegel, Humboldt, Ranke, and forty other names! The one interfering with the other. Varnhagen is going by *extra poste* to Munich. I remain to entertain repose and my guests. And possibly—Varnhagen is most anxious for it—I shall take a short trip, either with Schleiermacher to fetch his wife from Schleswig, or to Dresden to see Rede, or to Carolath to the Princess, or to Goethe; or, most likely, nowhere. I snatch a fragment of time to tell you

1820–30. this evening I have arranged for the Henckels, Yorck, Willisen, and others; and all last week we entertained Herr Pirault des Chaumes, with his big son Kalkreuth of Siegersdorf. Worthy Herr Pirault is an old Frenchman who repeats fables exquisitely. We miss the French, especially such as Montigny. You have all the interesting folks with you. . . . You know how much less I enjoy Hegel than Fichte, comparatively speaking, and especially in point of style. Now I have *commenced*, people will not allow me to continue, reading his "Encyclopædia of Philosophical Science in Outline," which he has dedicated to Varnhagen. *Parlez moi de ça!* Admirable, every line an incontrovertible definition. I mark and make notes as I go on. . . . It is very fine and useful where he says a philosophy must contain within itself all previous systems, occupy freely their standpoint, and combine with them; with examples and further explanations. As I have never understood otherwise, this was very satisfactory to me. It is an excellent book, which we must read together. The other day when Hegel was here I had not the courage to tell him I was reading his book. At the same time I am not without the conviction that I am one of his most appreciative students.

To Gentz, at Vienna.

Monday, December 22, 1828.

Evening, 7 o'clock.

It is all too long, while the sun has been on the earth, since I have been able to tread it or have been able to scratch with a pen. Yesterday was the shortest day, after that life and the year go upward together, until we go down

once for all to death. I am very rarely alone, that is, sure of remaining so for an hour. Varnhagen has now gone to a literary gathering. (All this is the date of my letter, but don't be alarmed; I am not sure that it will ever be sent off.) 1820–30.

When Varnhagen came home to-day at noon he handed me a letter, saying, "From Gentz." I read it in silence. He is wanting something, I thought at once; there is still something behind it, I thought when half way through; and as I had nearly finished I thought, nothing! But when I reached the actual end, and read your greeting to the *Frau Gemahlin*, with the addition that she could not give you up, although (these are the words) we could no longer understand each other by letter, then my whole soul was silent. All my past life seemed hovering before me on great grey wings; all that I had ever thought, every result which I had attained, all flitted silently before me. I wish to answer everything, and can answer nothing. The whole of the triumph-letter which you have written to Varnhagen, and in which I certainly have my part, has become nothing; I see only myself. And, as from all striking occurrences, I have learned a lesson; that means that I have discovered a new possibility. It surprises me that any human being can still influence me for evil, except through ennui, anger, or impatience. A person may please me by special characteristics, or as an individual he can call forth my compassion or my indignation; but he can no longer touch my heart so as to give it pain, or make me become self-absorbed. Love me, love me not, whether there be anything about me which I can love myself, or not. Thus also you stood in relation to me. You had already

1820–30. written to me yourself what I read in Varnhagen's letter to-day. Why does it so touch me? I do not ask you, I ask myself. In my inmost soul I think he has, nevertheless, understood me; if he ever reads my letter once more, he must understand every phrase, every expression, must be able to perceive and assimilate in one whole its utterance, thought, and melody. Did I not understand your letter of renunciation, based upon your *not* being understood? Do I not know what your wish is? Your are asking to have —to the highest questions of which the human spirit is capable, which are only wrung out of our souls—a bare, plain answer, hall-marked, valid, current in every domain. You will accept nothing but this plain coinage, because you abundantly possess for yourself everything that it has not —light, brilliancy, precious stones. And I repeat, once again, in our present incompleteness our existence is not absolute; the glimmering perception that we exist is to me the pledge of a loftier life which we cannot imagine. As my question is the pledge of a reply, my sorrow, proof of the existence of joy; so when men have reached this stage of questioning, have attained to this answer, then are they friends in trouble. The trouble I must concede to them, and so also must you; and I am more sorrowful than you poets, more earnest. *Pauvre humanité!* This was the best phrase Madame de Staël ever uttered. . . . How gladly I should see you. But that is a fancy, such as lies far back in the daylight of my youth. We gain nothing by reaching backwards; we rarely look round, indeed, it requires a faculty which we are apt to lose. One thing I know, that I need not look onwards. If I flew as Hebe through the world, I should not find a second like

yourself. You maintain a pure untarnished straightforwardness, which no mark of age can conceal, uttering itself with a naïveté which calls up love and smiles. This is true of your last letter to me, when I look at it in clear daylight, with no mists of feeling. 1820–30.

You would be surprised, if you were to live with me for two days now, how much riper and more at ease I am about all trifles. If it were not so foolish, I would already tell you of my pláns for the summer. But you are not to travel one step on my account. Keep your health! That is of all things most necessary. I know this, because I rarely feel it; weather, nerves: the instrument is too easily jarred. To-day I feel more human. Your letter to Varnhagen was a charming *élan*. I rejoiced in it for your sake. And so you dine sometimes with Frau von Eskeles? And poor Adam Müller is living up three flights of stairs, like the Olympus in Leipsic. Could you remember me to him? I have long intended to write, and will do so. I am told by an ambassador's wife that Schlegel likes the society in Dresden, although *les dames béguèles* would not at first receive him on account of the "Lucinde;" but, yes, yes, they feel themselves honoured! All the *salonists* consider that he talks well.—Adieu, adieu!

FRIEDRIKE VARNHAGEN.

As we thus pass on with Rahel towards 1830 we recognise a painful interval of transition in Prussia, both in social and political affairs. It must have tested the faith of any patriot to turn from the tumult of the great struggle for freedom, with Stein as its giant mover, and all the energies of the people roused into activity, to the feeble

1820–30. irritation of cabinet feuds which succeeded in Prussia, and was dignified by the name of politics. If it were true that the King of Prussia had been in years past an obstacle to the salvation of the country (which was in fact achieved in spite of him), how much more effectually did he stand in the way of all liberal progress in time of peace.

The popular war once over, the governing power drifted readily into the hands of an aristocracy ignorant of the wants of the people, naturally conservative, and eager to identify its own interest with that of the crown. The *Junker* element, which to-day struggles for existence, then carried all before it. Their brief national enthusiasm over, the people, as Börne says, "returned to the making of dumplings."

Varnhagen felt that his personal convictions and hopes for the future of Germany were entirely at variance with those of the Prussian cabinet. He withdrew more and more from public affairs, and arrived reluctantly at the conclusion that the political career which had opened for him with such promise of usefulness was not his vocation. He had lived, in the fullest sense, through a memorable epoch of history. His memory was stored with pictures of life and character connected with the great crisis through which his country had gone. We can well imagine how, through those years of external stagnation, as he wandered alone in the Thier-Garten, or talked with Rahel over bygone days, he might be tempted to believe that his life had been in vain, that the freedom for which he had toiled and suffered was further than ever removed; just as we stand upon a sea-shore and watch each retreating wave sweep down among the glistening points of rock, leaving them

again bare, and find it hard to realise that the tide is still advancing. It was written many centuries ago, "He that believeth shall not make haste," and as the silent forces of nature through the slow years accomplish their prescribed end, so through all human progress a "ceaseless purpose runs." Inspired by such philosophic or Christian faith, Varnhagen laboured resolutely to preserve for future generations some knowledge of what their past had been, and what it had accomplished; to preserve a record of that past which had held the living germ of the future. 1820-30.

To the title of historian, however, Varnhagen can scarcely lay a claim; the necessary earnestness and philosophic breadth are both lacking. Moreover, events which have transpired within a lifetime cannot be treated as history without a result analogous to the perspective of a Chinese landscape. His realistic cast of mind has happily spared posterity an abstruse history or a sentimental journal. He has left biographies which are portraits, and which show his clear insight into character, his ready appreciation of delicate phases of feeling, which are in fact masterpieces; also a continuous narrative of his life up to the Congress of Vienna, full of animated scenes of all kinds. He is a master of German style, and whether in his books, letters, or conversation, is always clear, vivacious, graceful. The charm of his conversation is said to have been very great; he would lead the talk imperceptibly from one subject to another, brightening it here with a piquant anecdote, there with a sharp criticism or a philosophical thought, so that the intellectual refinement and the genial fascination of the man overcame his little weaknesses. Of these so much has

1820–30. been said that one would imagine no man of letters had ever before maintained an opinion of his own, or been guilty of the sin of vanity. Varnhagen has been heartily abused as vain, garrulous, and irreligious. To the former charge, all the society of his youth lay open: it was a memoir-writing age, and perhaps few men know the measure of their own self-complacency until they begin to write an autobiography. He was, undoubtedly, a man who spoke and wrote much; interchange of thought was essential to his mental health. If Mr. Crabbe Robinson during his tour in Germany had met Varnhagen, it is more than probable that our countryman might, for once, have proved the listener. The charge of irreligion is maintained by the extreme pietists in Germany. He certainly did not see religious questions as they saw them. We have to put against their charges the blameless integrity of his life, and the fact that from his early manhood the companion of his quiet hours of thought was the true-hearted mystic, John Tauler.

When Perthes projected his Historico-political Review, in 1831, it was to Varnhagen that he looked to discharge the onerous office of editor. Eichhorn, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Count Bernstorff, and others were so far agreed as to see the wisdom of employing the press in order to place the government in as favourable a light as possible before the nation. Upon minor matters it was not so easy to agree. In April, Perthes writes to Varnhagen: "The dangers which I saw to be imminent in the temper of the Germans last November, when I wrote to Count Bernstorff, are now greatly diminished. Many, however, are still of opinion that we should not resist the French,

because, according to them, the substance of civilisation which the French bring with them is worth more than the substance of nationality. Students and shopmen indulge in this sort of talk at *tables-d'hôte.*" Perthes was well aware that he could rely upon Varnhagen's fidelity to German interests, and upon his able and outspoken advocacy of them. But this very tenacity of opinion, as well as the unflinching assertion of it which characterised Varnhagen, made him unwilling to undertake the work. He was too independent a man to become the subservient tool of any cabinet. This his political enemies also knew, and opposed his editorship. To the great disappointment of Perthes the Review was ultimately put into the hands of Ranke, with Eichendorff in the background as prompter. 1820–30.

While sympathising with and aiding Varnhagen in his literary work, Rahel, for herself, disliked the publicity of appearing in print. "I am certainly not unwilling," she wrote to Fouqué, "to become an author. I should not be ashamed to write a work like Newton's on astronomy or mathematics, but to be able to produce no work and yet to be in print is a thing I abhor." How it happened, therefore, that her *Denkblätter einer Berlinerin* ever were published, we may learn through a letter from her which accompanied a copy to Gentz at Vienna.

Saturday, eleven o'clock, October 9, 1830.

Dull, rain and fog.

I have a foolish, a very foolish offering to make you. By the courier you will receive from me two printed sheets, containing some aphorisms of mine, and called,

1820–30. "Stray Thoughts from a Berliner." These pages, however, do not contain a half of what I have thought and suffered. They are taken from many years of my life; they are a distilled essence mainly of the sorrows of life. They may possess interest even for those who do not know me, should they be gifted with a higher understanding. Your first question is, of course, "Why are they printed?" and your second, "Why printed in this manner?"

After a long, dangerous, and most painful illness in the spring of '29, I was lying half convalescent, when Fouqué came to implore Varnhagen for something for his journal. Varnhagen had nothing. Fouqué was in despair. Varnhagen asked me if he might send those aphorisms which he had been collecting. I was then, as now, perfectly indifferent to it. I replied, Yes. Varnhagen had copied out of my letters and journals anything that he could lay hands on, and now gave them up to Fouqué. I know perfectly well that you cannot read them without interest. Just now you have time (that would sound odd if it referred to political time), even spare intervals. I send you something to fill them up. These are pictures of my inner life, together one picture. Without any affectation, they come from the life of the heart, from quiet thought, and must be at least suggestive.

Your reference to Heine came as an unexpected, unhoped-for acquisition. I think with you on all those points. Many of the poems I find admirable. He has also a great gift of style; I say *gift* with meaning. Frederick Schlegel has the same thing (without the same art or thought); it is what I call having a sieve in the ear,

so that nothing bad is allowed to pass. Heine has many other gifts beside this. . . . He was introduced to me some years ago, as so many, too many, people are. Being cultivated and original, I soon understood him where others did not : he also understood me, liked me, and took me as his patroness. I praised him willingly, as did others ; at the same time I spoke decidedly about what I did not like, and if I saw anything in his manuscripts which I did not approve, I often struck it out before they went to press. Most unexpectedly I received from him at Hamburg a bound book of his poems dedicated to myself. . . . I like especially that sea picture, in which he sees the ancient gods in the clouds : it is exquisite. Now, farewell, as well as you can, and believe me to be, as I am still so young, yours unalterably,[1] R. V. 1820-30

This was among the last of the many letters Rahel wrote to Gentz. Their correspondence had extended with fitful interruptions and some misunderstandings since those early days of the *salon* in the Jägerstrasse, long before her marriage, where Gentz was a constant visitor. Her letters were always a source of delight to him, and he naïvely confesses on one occasion certain small subterfuges of which he had often been guilty for the sole purpose of procuring that gratification. He used to copy them out, that he might enjoy the pleasure of reperusal unalloyed by the torture of her tiny and uncertain writing. After inditing letters to her, some of which would have passed for love letters in any other country but Germany, he breaks out into regret concerning "the loss it has been to the

[1] Appendix L.

820-30. world that their mutual regard should always have remained within the boundary of friendship." That it never became love, he theorises, was owing to her being so high above him: "thus in their interchange of thought she was the creative man, he the receptive woman." The brilliancy, the *abandon* of Gentz; the suggestiveness, the rapid thought, the genial kindliness of Rahel, must have made this correspondence one of the most entertaining in an age which offered the greatest variety in letter-writing. He compared her thoughts to "fresh and fragrant strawberries gathered with the sand and roots still clinging to them."

Heine always acknowledged the great debt he owed to Rahel's personal friendship and literary help. It was extended also to others of the same short-lived poetic school, and gave her the title of "the Mother of Young Germany."

In our own day, when the common test of power is publicity and print, it is somewhat hard to realise the character and the strength of the literary influence which Rahel exerted. At first sight it may seem as though that "spoken literature" which she was said to have created had passed away. But Rahel's active faith in individual efforts and their measureless result is not without its justification even in the rapid industrial and political growth of Germany in the present day. That period of social and literary activity which received its inspiration from Rahel's suggestive genius, from Fichte's moral earnestness, from Schleiermacher's culture of the individual, was not only brilliant in its day, but far-reaching in its influence. Through countless channels it has helped the nation to grasp one fundamental truth, that it should look for freedom

not to a constitution or to a republic, but to individual moral rectitude. For fifty years this thought has been slowly spreading through the length and breadth of Germany; in verse, in fiction, in conscientious military duty—in shapes of endless variety. In it they possess the germ of all true liberty and of all national greatness. 1820–30.

CHAPTER XI.

God did anoint thee with His odorous oil
To wrestle, not to reign; and He assigns
All thy tears over, like pure crystallines,
For younger fellow-workers of the soil
To wear for amulets. So others shall
Take patience, labour, to their heart and hand,
From thy hand, and thy heart, and thy brave cheer,
And God's grace fructify through thee to all.

E. B. BROWNING.

IN 1829 Count Custine revisited Berlin in the hope of seeing Rahel, after a lapse of many years. Failing to do this, he left his book "Aloys" for her friendly criticism. In reply he received one of her characteristic letters. The thread of presentiment which runs through it reminds us that the writer only just survived those "three years," which she speaks of as too long an interval for the patience upon which life had already made so many demands.

TO ASTOLF, COUNT VON CUSTINE, IN PARIS.

Berlin, October 30, 1829.

Friday Evening, 8 *o'clock.*

This morning, my dear friend, I have received your letter. I had then much to do; to see after children, purchase-making, social duties, bills, visits—all on a back-ground of indifferent health. Such a small back-ground, in fact, that any one of these duties is alone enough to

knock me up, and on this very account I am constantly postponing them until it ends in my doing all upon the same day. Now, I send you with this a list of those marked passages in "Aloys" which please me. No easy task for *una povretta* like myself to seek out the faint marks by lamplight; but it is done. I tell you this because I have already said to myself that nothing would have given me energy enough to do it but some misfortune, or a letter from Astolf. And again, I tell you this because you ask me whether our meeting would have been an epoch in my life also? So truly would it have been one, that for my part I should never have put this question to you, because I should not have expected that answer which I give from the depths of my heart. This question, this pleasant question, completes the happiness of recognition. Happiness certainly makes epochs; it is a thing we are not in the habit of finding, and us it rarely seeks! Miracles are still possible, those of the Bible, those of the mythology. Happiness still comes down from heaven either in angelic or in human shape, as it once appeared to me in the common-place "Willow-tree Inn" at Frankfort. In our highest moods we still experience miracles as at the day of creation. Oh, how much I should have to say to you if we could be any length of time together. You talk of spending a winter in Berlin. Good God! If it were only possible for you to do so, before you are free from your house! Wait three years? That will not do, it is too long. I have learned to wait for all that I care most about, on into another world; but I am too old to wait for three years here. Can you not shorten it by a winter in Berlin? Not that I wish to see you, especially in Berlin, in this "re-

Æt. 59. 1830.

Æt. 59. markable town of Germany." I am somewhat in a false
1830. position here, and the greater my desire to live with a friend the less should I wish it to be in this place. I was born here, I have friends, I have an abstract position and so forth, but the indescribable something that I need you would at once perceive without a word from me. Nevertheless, I should be extremely glad to see you in Berlin, after having told you that it is not perfect. I live much at home, and much alone; in fact, as much as I choose. But in Baden, there I should like to see you before the three years are over! At any rate, do be careful that I should always know where you are; force yourself to write me word. I think of all my friends you most entirely understand me and reciprocate my attachment. The apostates! They distress me no longer. *On ne peut parvenir à me rendre malheureux.* I welcome you afresh! But a miracle may still give me happiness.

There is one thing about our friendship which is so delightful, that we have no fixed relation to each other, make no demands the one upon the other; that I am old, you are young; that you are a man, I a woman; that you are French, I am German. Even our separation has been good. All combine to make it an attachment above age, above sex, above country.

I had been thinking much about finding a translator for your book; Varnhagen also, when he found in the publishing catalogue that it was already translated. He sends very kind regards. He will write a notice of your book in a journal which is published weekly by Fouqué. I will tell you to-morrow what I think of it, to-day I must rest. Fouqué has also something from Varnhagen, and from me

aphorisms, results *à la Chamfort;* but I did not think of him. When an opportunity offers I will send them to you, perhaps before your journey. Good-bye until to-morrow. Apropos! I am enchanted with the "Orientales" of Victor Hugo, the first of his writings which I have read. You will distress me if you do not like him. Æt. 59. 1830.

Saturday, October 31, Midday.

Now, about your book! It is full of that which I most value in a composition. Full of inner thought, of unusual emotion, of rare perception, all well represented. Talent and considerable skill shaped to an organic whole by the will of the author, and borrowing additional charm from the original language, which flows on with perfect ease; and also from its exhaustive study of life. This we see in the "Regent," at once so mighty and so small! To foreigners it remains a mystery whom these persons represent, but that they are portraits is evident to the most commonplace. They are so well done that they represent not the single individual only, but an entire class.

Must not the true artist always find and seize this in each one? Mad. de M. is admirable, I see her before me; the young man I absolutely know; the husband, the count, are living, as are all the rest. And thus we have a complete romance—our own life, rightly looked at, is always the fullest, best—concealed under a light and pleasant essay.

Yet there is something I should like added to this romance, a wider, more animated background. The young man himself may be described by traits of character and of the family life in which he lives apart from the world. He is

Æt. 59. 1830. a creation of the author. The author himself, however, cannot escape from giving to those he represents a full and broad activity. Then, if he describes a character to whom this wider world is a matter of indifference, it receives at once a piquant individuality. We find this necessity also with the greatest writers. With Shakespere, Cervantes, Goethe; with Molière, Lafontaine (you need not laugh!). Their stage is always the whole world, put before us with measured masterstrokes. I should like to have more of such external representation as would bring before us the scientific, social, political relations which surround the characters. Now my criticism is at an end, and I await yours *upon it.*

Whilst writing this it has become clear to me that a stay in Berlin would be of infinite service to you. By the most agreeable and social means you would be made familiar with a rich though new literature—naturally therefore with a new life—and that in my house. In the centre of it all stands Varnhagen, through his life and work. Everything comes through him, and he puts more books and pamphlets into my hands than the most industrious could read. I know something of all that goes on, and everlasting discussions and inquiries I carry on myself. You would be in the centre of Germany, *sauf le pédantisme, que je tue à trente lieues à la ronde.* Through my mere existence I am such a poison tree to it.

Read if possible—for you have everything in Paris—the King of Bavaria's poems. It will be enough for you that they please me, who have a prejudice against all the poetry which comes into my hands. Graceful thought, feeling for nature, without affectation or modern effort after feeling, art, religion. Very good—for a king!

We have enjoyed all that you wrote from Paris; it is so true. A thousand pleasant things to Mons. Bärstecher and yourself. I see into your soul as into a clear stream, and so you are dear to me. Write soon. Æt. 59. 1830.

FR. VARNHAGEN.

My nerves will not let me write upon thinner paper; pardon this.

Again to Count Custine, in April, 1830:—

"'Detestable Paris,' you say. Rightly. Every monster city becomes the same. Even Berlin. (Just now Berlin is covered with the most beautiful flowers; windows, streets, squares, cellars, all full of them. Varnhagen has just brought me a lovely bouquet from the new Flower-market; green opening buds are everywhere; a lingering remnant of the priceless barbarism of a small town!)

"But I positively adore you for your expressions about money — that, young as you are in disposition and character, you can thus see what it really is worth. *L'imagination*, as you say, is the essential thing. To have it well directed is a kind of salvation, it lifts us into security. Money is the result of past movements — even that of the sun — and the cause of future ones; therefore it may well become a resource of practical life, and to give it only its due acknowledgment at the age when one is most capable of living, is a discovery calling for much congratulation.

"'What am I going to do?' I ask myself the same question. Your invitation is at least the fourth which I have had into Silesia. Five miles from Breslau there is an angel, the Countess of York, daughter-in-law to the field-marshal, who is quite young, who loves me, and has

Æt. 59. 1830. invited me. Then for four summers in succession I have owed a visit to Adelheid Carolath. How is it all to be managed? Then I have a little child living with me from whom I could not tear myself without a bleeding heart. Put all these things together. You must come here and fetch me; I have a carriage in which we can start. At any rate write soon, while there is time. Do you think I shall live for ever? Do you know where to find such a second friend? You are rich and free, do not let this part of your life slip away from you. I am a kind of mother and companion, yet neither, and more. Does your friend look at the trees as I do? Does he cry 'Astolf,' as I do, when one sees one that is especially graceful, or rich, or grotesque, or verdant? Is he content when you do *not* write to him, as I am?

"Varnhagen shares our friendship and sends you greeting. I long for our answer.—FR. V."

Rahel does not appear to have kept any continuous diary. Stray passages of description, fragments of conversations were occasionally noted down by her and by Varnhagen. Her letters abound in thoughts and observations of great beauty or practical value, but yet often imbedded as it were in paragraphs of no general interest to the English reader. We have endeavoured to glean a few.

Upon one occasion Rahel mentioned a trait of one of her servants which was very admirable but not conventionally correct. "That is the way servants are spoiled," said the person addressed. Rahel laughingly replied, "I am selfish, I prefer spoiling them to spoiling myself."

A witty young friend of Rahel was married to a gentle-

man who had long admired her for this qualification. The pair were spoken of in her hearing, and some one remarked, "But she is no longer witty." "Why should she be?" replied Rahel, quickly, "she is happy." Æt. 59. 1830.

"And you are going to see Cologne, the crazy nest! This miserable, petrified colossus of old-Frankish follies and unpleasantnesses, which they are now trying to make so celebrated! A place in which one feels as though one must go mad! A town which has no centre, no corso, no face, no prospect, which turns it back even upon the Rhine. Also the cathedral does not, like Strasburg or St. Stephen's at Vienna, command veneration and repose. It is only interesting to a technically trained architect, we are not impressed by it, we see only boards and palings. Our government and its agents work themselves to death to gratify the popular outcry and prop up the decrepid colossus; let them first turn an ungainly dying greybeard into a fresh, healthful, growing child! It is true there is some difficulty about allowing such a monster to perish, only it is of no use trying through it to restore the olden times. Like the Rhine, they have flowed on and away. Cologne is a monument of Roman rule beyond Roman territory; Roman ruin, German struggle, clever and awkward, and to this very hour never getting rid of Rome: such are we people of the present day!"

May 13, 1826.

Frau Bettine von Arnim[1] has been here, and spoke well on many subjects. Among other things, she said that in

[1] Best known to us through Goethe's "Correspondence with a Child."

Æt. 59. 1830. falling asleep we could to some extent prescribe the direction of our thoughts; that she had often tried it, and moreover that it was confirmed by Plato. I reminded Varnhagen that I had always said in real deep sleep the soul returns home for strength, otherwise it could not endure; it is a promised refuge, a bathing in the sea of God.

Frau von Arnim also complained that so much energy and so many gifts in people remained without result, were never turned to definite account; one felt it every day, and sometimes painfully. I said nothing in reply. When she had gone, Varnhagen repeated it, and added, "It is true of all gifted people, and even of those who are apparently common-place. How much slumbers in every one of us!"

"Yes," I said, "it must be so; it is like oil in a lamp, if it were not there the lamp would go out; but there is always more oil there than the flame requires, the last drop upon the wick must be kept up by others." And after an interval of sad thought, "Ah, it is all right, only we cannot understand it."

March 12, 1828.

Of all the women I ever knew, Frau von Kalb has the most genius; her intellect seems really to have wings, upon which, at any moment and under all circumstances, it can soar into any region. This is a positive happiness, it gives a sense of freedom, a power of transition from exalted thought to homely humour. She abandons herself as she pleases to opinions or prejudices, to any favourite or prevalent forms of thought or views of life, and withal can laugh and make herself agreeable. She shakes her

wings a little, and while the mere burden sinks to her feet the nobler thoughts take their own flight. Æt. 59. 1830.

Frau von Arnim is, I think, the cleverest; of her one might say that her mind possesses her, not she it; she has remarkable adaptability. What we call I, is only the combination and direction of our gifts. As Frau von Kalb, in her sprightly way, will pass on from one point of view in the certainty of arriving at a new one, so with Frau von Arnim, when she has once gained a position, an outburst of dissatisfaction follows which impels her at any price to seek out something new. This kind of thing cannot go on without mischief.

The grandest womanly character with which I ever came in contact was that of the Countess Josephine Pachta. Nothing could ever prevent her from acting in accordance with her convictions, neither could anything disturb them. She also is cheerful, and to be honoured in every way.

The only metaphysical head I ever met with among women was the Arch-Duchess Stephanie of Baden. She was capable of following out real thought under any circumstances, and involuntarily led every conversation into a thoughtful direction. Like other great people, she was not always in the loftiest intellectual regions, but could find herself at home there at any moment.

All these women had a thousand pleasant and endearing qualities, each in her own way; talent, intellect, everything.

. . . Madame de Staël, in her book "Sur les passions," is tormented by the fear that women who possess talent for writing should therefore be called unfeminine, or that their work should not be estimated as highly as that of men. Poor fear! As though a good book would not be

Æt. 59. 1830. good if a mouse had written it, and could not be any the better if its author wore angel's wings upon his shoulders. So much for the book itself. Whether a woman should write at all is another question, which is almost too absurd to answer with gravity. If she has time, if she has talent, and especially if her husband desires it, it then becomes a conjugal duty; but if he only permits it, or is pleased; if it keeps her from what is idler, if she does good or helps the income, let her by all means write; if she is a great writer, she must do it in any case. If Frau von Fichte had written Fichte's works, would they be any the worse? Or has it been proved by her organisation that a woman cannot think or express her thoughts? Even if so, it would still be a duty to renew the effort again and again.

If any one not knowing Germany reads her book—*book!* loose rambling thoughts; *thoughts!* remarks, glimpses, snatches of unassimilated reading—about it, what a dark, cold, smoky cavern it must seem to them; a cavern in which wander desolate phantasists eternally condemned to be honest; in which here and there sit figures in intranced meditation. In the same way she has described our universities. Like her sad self, a woman without perception or music! . . . Her book is one lyrical sigh that she can no longer lead the Paris conversation; the most important subjects only become so to her through this medium. Madame de Staël is to me like a disturbing hurricane; she has no repose.

A man exists only in his character; that is himself, that is his destiny; character is but courage, courage which is added to our other gifts, which imparts to them motion and direction. I have many gifts, but no courage, not the

courage to direct my capacity, to teach me to enjoy, if it is to be at another's cost. I value every one's personality before my own, prefer peace to enjoyment, and have possessed nothing. Such people are not favourites of fortune. And so I, though greatly gifted, remain where I am. Æt. 59. 1830.

Justice for others, courage for ourselves, these are two virtues in which all the rest consist.

We should hold one to another; we are so foolish, we seek fortune and forsake happiness.

Some one has said, "I wish nothing in heaven but to rest from earth." A thought whose depth is unfathomable, which comes we know not whence, bringing its own inspiration.

Age is always unjust to youth. It knows what youth is, but youth cannot understand age. Yet age demands that youth should possess, already distilled, the subtle drop of truth-essence, without ever having seen the tree of life, in foliage, in blossom, or in fruit! A babe could not be younger or more unreasonable. Is youth to believe age? It cannot; wrinkles alone are no testimony.

When we have learned to love we know that we exist; until then we only knew about things and thoughts. We progress continually and can only study ourselves in the past; we only see another *as a whole.* So we only love others, not ourselves.

We have no new experiences, it is always the new people who go through the old ones.

The conscience is the health of the soul, and only on this condition is life desirable.

I am patient so long as I learn something; only do not let suffering be in vain.

Æt. 59. 1830. Nothing is to me so important, so real, as weather. I am convinced that one day it will become a science, and we shall then be able to compound weather as we now do medicine.

What, in fact, is man but a question? He is here to ask—to ask bold and honest questions, and to wait humbly for the answers. Not to ask boldly, or to give oneself flattering answers, is the root of all error.

I have never regretted what I did willingly, but often what I have done reluctantly.

It is a happiness that the most excellent people are often so unendurable in ordinary intercourse, otherwise we should reproach ourselves perpetually for being attracted by those who are less unexceptionable.

Tenderness implies mind as well as feeling.

We should do well to treat each other always as half-convalescents, since we have all yet to attain to the perfect health of our higher life.

Qualifications are not talents, but must be made into them, otherwise one is not cultivated.

I do not know how any one becomes a misanthrope. The more wrong I suffer from individuals, the more sensitive I become to every kind word; I always love afresh.

Only foolish things succeed, one is inclined to say on looking abroad upon circumstances and events. And we are not far wrong. A foolish effort may well succeed, since it is one-sided; a better one demands the accordance of so many different powers striving in the same direction, that we cannot possibly expect the approval of the whole world.

It is, I am sure, an element of human life that a man

should suffer precisely in that relation which makes it most painful, most unbearable to him. *How* he comes out of it all is the essential point. Æt. 59. 1830.

People are always misleading one; if they would just let us alone, we should find out much sooner what is the right thing to do.

Writing of herself in 1831:—

"Everything comes to my ears. I speak to all and all speak to me, every class. When I come to die, you may think 'she knew everything, because she entered into it all; because she never was, or pretended to be, anything in herself; she only loved thought, and to make thought connected and harmonious; she understood Fichte, loved green fields, loved children; knew something of the arts, both of use and beauty: endeavoured to help God in His creatures always, uninterruptedly, and thanked Him that He made her thus.

"This I have worked out for myself, that I am not beloved of fate and fortune, but of God and nature I am.

"I have grown old in tears, but all is well—God is wiser than we are.

"Towards the end of our life (1832) we have a feeling like that which we remember to have felt before we fully entered upon it. A vague, forward yearning, which is our part in infinitude. Whatever else we may have lost, this little blessedness is worth something, only to taste here this second youth. How full and exquisite is that sense of existence which comes upon us at times simply through the atmosphere, and is a part of it! Think what this would be, crowned with intellect which could reflect upon

Æt. 59. 1830. it, crowned with a soul all eagerness to dispense it to every other creature; and that to attain it we should require only *health* that should fit us for that atmosphere. In eternity I look, as St. Martin says, for ever fresh relations. How slowly they come, how long we wait! What suffering we pass through—but I thank God for the glimmer of day."

To Rahel, with her strong affections, her natural reverence, religion was a necessity. But in those days it was not easy to find a creed precisely in harmony with a mind so progressive, so original, so unfitted to work in any conventional dogmatic groove. It has been said of her that "by spirit, as well as by race, she came from those regions whence the Bible came." She came into an atmosphere of scientific questioning, of philosophical morality, into the day of Lessing, of Kant, of Moses Mendelssohn. With the religious thought of that time, as it shaped itself among Romanists or extreme Pietists, she could not entirely sympathise. She was compelled to work her own way upward, starting with the old Semitic faith in one all-ruling God, the Father of the faithful, and a belief in the Bible as His revelation to man.

Rahel's early association with the household of Moses Mendelssohn had served to free her from many Jewish prejudices. "Nothing was ever taught me," she once wrote. "I grew up in the wild forest of humanity, and Heaven took pity on me, and saved me from what was base and untrue. But I could never have been taught religion; I look for that from above." Thus, as her mind grew, she had little to unlearn, she had only to wait and

hear what, in Hebrew phrase, "the voice of the Lord" would say to her in the joy and sorrow of life, in the love and in the labour which alone make that life worth living. She was keenly alive to everything which could minister to religious faith, to spiritual development, either for herself or for friends who were dear to her. Her reading ranged over every shade of thought, from Spinoza to Angelus Silesius, from Kant to Saint-Martin. With Kant she believed in individual responsibility, holding that every man must, under Divine guidance, but by his own strenuous effort, "work out his own salvation" from error and from evil. While, with Silesius, she could thus express her faith in the life and death of Christ, "The thought of all thoughts is that God became man," she writes, and also frequently quotes from the same author lines like the following:— Æt. 59. 1830.

> Though Christ in Bethlehem a thousand times be born,
> And not in thee, so art thou lost for evermore.

This doctrine is reiterated throughout the highflown effusions of Angelus Silesius, and was to her one of the chief attractions of his writings. His book of religious epigrams, "The Cherubic Wanderer," had been resuscitated with other relics by the Romanticists, and Rahel contributed not a little to its enthusiastic reception. She sent a copy to an intimate friend, with the following letter.

To Caroline, Countess Schlabrendorf, in Dresden.

Berlin, July 22, 1820.

Dear Countess, firm Friend,—The waves of life either creep silently upon us, or they rush on, dashing stormily

Æt. 59. 1830. above our heads. If friends are not on board the same vessel, bound for the same shore, they may vainly try to keep a firm hold of each other. Even if flung together they are but like inanimate things without common purpose or impulse. This is why separation is so hard; sympathy stagnates, and it is the same with the quick-witted as with the commonplace. Only this advantage remains, that when they do meet again, the stream of life will probably have worn in each the same channels. Further we ought always to remember, when any intellectual treasure is floated towards us, not in obtuse egotism to fish it up for ourselves alone, but presently to send it drifting onward to our nearest friend.

It is with this feeling, dear friend, that I send you this little volume—Angelus Silesius. A treasure of thoughts, jewels of lofty pride and of the truest humility, such as move one to a smile; questions concerning God asked in faith, despair consoled, weakness divinely strengthened. All this expressed in fluent, cultivated, felicitous language, which yet owes all its charm to the thought: it does not simply drape the thoughts, but is a living part of them. . . . . These sayings have strengthened my head and heart, as mountain air invigorates the over-wrought physical frame. May you thus enjoy them, and let me hear of it! R.

The writings of the French mystics had also many attractions for Rahel. She delighted in Fénélon, Madame Guyon, and above all in Saint-Martin[1]—the Jacob Behmen of France. So far from being daunted by his obscurities, she seemed to possess some spiritual gift by which

[1] Appendix M.

to interpret what others looked upon with doubt or scorn. Æt. 59. 1830.
This contemplative mysticism had its fitting counterpoise in the direct realism of Rahel's character, the intellectual and practical activity of her life. She followed the philosophic thought of Kant, of Fichte, and of Hegel, while retaining undimmed her clear spiritual insight, her unshaken faith in the Divine and loving guidance of human affairs. Custine said of her, most truly, *Elle avait l'esprit d'un philosophe, avec le cœur d'un apôtre.*

Whatever may have been the precise tenets of her creed wrung out for herself at last through pain, and loss, and prayer, she exhibited in her life two characteristics of Christianity, the love of God and the love of her neighbour. Believing that through the love of man we come to understand something of God, she studied, while revering the Saviour of Gentile and of Jew, to carry out into practical life His gospel of labour and of love. Rahel accepted Christianity in its broad relation to mankind and in its spiritual influence upon the individual. Her religion might be defined as the worship of God through the service of man. This constancy and depth of her belief in the unseen gave a fixedness to her thought, a stability and grandeur to her whole character.

At the same time few people could be said to live more intensely in the present than did Rahel. She occupied herself not only with its intellectual movements but with its social incidents, its musical or dramatic chit-chat, its household cares or pleasures, especially with all that concerned her friends. With political movements her sympathy was equally prompt and true. She had in her youth lived through the epoch of the French Revolution,

Æt. 59. 1830. when the great wave of thought in France whitened with its ripple the most distant shore of the most distant sea, when—

> From hour to hour the antiquated earth
> Beat like the heart of man.

She had seen the principles of that revolution reversed, liberty become despotism. In her own country she had seen cowardice and treachery reaping their harvest of tyranny and humiliation; the short-lived vitality of the nation again overridden by aristocratic officialism. Here, in later life, we find Rahel once more taking the broadest view. Liberty she held to be self-government, not freedom from government. Upon the character of its laws rather than upon the form of its government, the well-being of a nation must depend. It is the duty of the people, therefore, to rouse themselves to ascertain and to secure that such laws be just and free, and honestly administered. It was to advance liberalism of this kind that Ludwig Börne wrote from 1816 or 1817 until after the July revolution in 1830. Rahel forgot the personal dislike she had once entertained for the man, in admiration for his genius and sympathy with his object. He saw more clearly, perhaps, than any other German the mischief of that separation between the intellectual power and the practical life in Germany. His caustic words, embittered by exile, lodged in many minds. They were welcomed by isolated thinkers, by men who waited, and thought, and dreamed their dim prophetic dreams of a free united fatherland. He said in words what the whole nation should have said in deeds. German to the heart's core, he wore his life away in restless grief at German immobility.

With the progress of liberal thought in these later years of Rahel's life, we find associated the personal influence as well as the writings of Hegel. He had succeeded Schelling at Jena, and in Berlin, in 1818, took the most important chair in Germany as successor to Fichte. Rahel was soon numbered among the enlightened adherents who helped to diffuse his philosophical teaching throughout the country. His "Method," the Germans think, accomplished more than the spinning of "dialectic cobwebs." The great merit perceived in it by Rahel and others, was its power to rouse men to recognise their own capacity and responsibility as men and citizens. If the German soldier of to-day is proud to believe his country made by Bismarck, the German thinker holds enthusiastically that modern Germany is the creation of Hegel. Rahel was also well acquainted with the writings of the French Liberals. Benjamin Constant she had known personally since 1804, and one of the last letters she ever wrote was addressed to Victor Hugo. Of a book of travels published in 1823, by "young M. Thiers," she prophetically said:—"The book is full of facts and of sound healthy views; there are many revelations about the Spanish borders, and the chapter on Marseilles is admirable. In Thiers there is the making of a statesman. He sees through to its original cause all that comes before him: he is a poet in expression, that is, he knows how to embody for us all that he has seen in infinitely varied language." Æt. 59. 1830.

And again to Oelsner, in 1823:—"Be sure that you keep M. Thiers in with the Germans; he is a born finance minister."

Æt. 61. 1832. But the ideas which most occupied the mind of Rahel during the latest months of her life, and which she welcomed with an eager and hopeful enthusiasm, were those which startled the world in the writings of St. Simon. She read not his works only, but those also of his followers in their organ, "La Globe." Dissatisfied as we have seen her to be with the stereotyped and lifeless condition of Christianity around her, with German negation of political life, with the indifference to the condition of the poorer classes, with the social and legal oppression of women, we cannot wonder that these bold theories were hailed by her, not as another gospel, but as the dawning of a new era in the worn-out social economy. For many of the views advanced by the writers of the St. Simonian school she had been prepared by her familiarity with the writings of Fichte, and with that philosophy of individuality which had been long current in Germany. So that in many instances where the temerity of these writers called forth surprise and alarm, she only saw her own vague thoughts assuming a more systematic shape. Rahel, however, only lived long enough to see their rapid progress from brilliant thinkers to "living books" (1830 to 1833), and to sympathise in their main effort to bring about a complete unity between thought and action. She did not live to see the final failure of this effort through their forgetfulness of the fact that all great impulses come from below and must work their way upward. When the St. Simonians so far forgot their theories of liberty as to institute an intellectual hierarchy, it scarcely needed the vagaries of a Père Enfantin to precipitate their downfall. Rahel shared Heine's temporary enthusiasm for St. Simonianism, and wrote some letters

on the subject to him in Paris, of which he says: "They are the most remarkable that ever came from her pen. I am intending to make use of them for my autobiographical work, in which I give a plastic sketch of this extraordinary woman." [1] Æt. 61. 1832.

In the summer of 1832 Rahel's health again became a matter of serious anxiety to her friends. While she had been constantly liable to attacks of rheumatism, of gout, of nervous headache, and always painfully alive to every atmospheric change, her natural strength of constitution bore her through all with a triumphant cheerfulness. But the illness of 1832 was more vital in its character, and for some time left little room for hope. It was with delighted surprise, therefore, that Varnhagen watched the daily returning vigour, and in her elastic will to live welcomed the possibility of a bright old age. With the approach of winter, however, the former anxieties returned. Rahel was rarely able to leave the house, her enjoyment of music and of the drama, which had been life-long, was now at an end. While unwilling to forego the almost necessary pleasure of seeing some evening visitors, intimate friends, about her, she was frequently obliged to withdraw from them and remain for an interval in absolute quiet; then returning, she would resume the conversation with all her accustomed cheerfulness. She still retained her marvellous power of adapting herself to everybody, of perceiving and drawing out their special characteristics. One particular delight in these last evenings she found in the rich voice and the artistic singing of her sister-in-law Ernestine Robert. On the 20th of

[1] Appendix N.

Æt. 62. 1833. January, 1833, she was able to drive out into the Thier-Garten, and for the last time enjoyed the clear air and sunshine which seemed essential to her life.

But acute attacks of illness (*brustkrämpfe*) became more frequent and more distressing. Dora, the attendant who had been to her for twenty years both friend and nurse, was unfailing in her tender solicitude, but as the suffering became more intolerable, she craved the support and sympathy of her husband. She would ask him to say something to strengthen and comfort her, while at the same time uttering higher thoughts than any round her had to offer. After one terrible night of suffering she greeted Varnhagen in her most expressive tones. "Oh, I am quite happy, I am God's creature, He knows all about me, and before long I shall understand why it was good and necessary for me to suffer thus; I have to learn something from it, and with the new insight I shall recognise each pain as a joy, each sorrow as a glory! And is not this confidence itself a happiness to me? So also is all the love which is about me."

Rahel had suffered much of many physicians, both by necessity, by experiment, and by entire misapprehension. Recovery she knew to be no longer possible. To prolong the intervals of respite from suffering was all that could be hoped for. At the urgent entreaty of Bettine von Arnim, Rahel consented to see Dr. von Necher, a very successful homœopathic physician, then temporarily in Berlin in attendance upon the Duke of Lucca. He won Rahel's confidence, and she carefully followed his instructions, although they often involved the renunciation of stimulants and palliations to which she had been long accus-

tomed. No signs of amendment appeared, and the nights became even worse. One day, when Dora made some reference to the coming summer, she whispered, "Ah, if you did but know my thoughts; I think I shall not see the end of March." At other times, however, she was brighter, and able to look forward at least for others, making household arrangements, and considering with provident foresight the wants of some whom she considered dependent upon her. Varnhagen has recorded of these sad last days, intervals of sympathetic interchange of feeling and expressions of religious thought which were a happy memory to him in later years. All such references came from Rahel with the frankness natural to her; her religious faith was a part of her daily experience, and in sickness, as in health, was genuine, bright, and ever present. Æt. 62. 1833.

Part of a conversation held on the 2nd of March is thus given by Varnhagen:—

"What a history is mine," she exclaimed, with great agitation. "I, a fugitive from Egypt and Palestine, find with you help, love, and tender care! It was God's will, dear August, to send me to you, and you to me. With delighted exaltation I look back upon my origin, upon the link which my history forms between the oldest memories of the human race and the interests of to-day, between the broadest interval of time and space. That which was, during the early part of my life, the greatest ignominy, the cause of bitterest sorrow, to have been born a Jewess, I would not now have otherwise at any price. And shall I not find it to be the same with all this present suffering?

Æt. 62. 1833. Shall I not joyfully rise above it, and find it to have been of priceless value? Dear August, is there not wonderful consolation in the parallel? We will go forward in this strength!"

Then she continued, with many tears: "Dear August, my heart has been strengthened by thinking of Jesus and His sorrows, and I have felt, realised, for the first time, that He is our brother."

At another time, with cheerful earnestness, she told them of a dream which had often consoled her.

"I once dreamt, when I was seven years old, that I saw our heavenly Father, quite close. He leant over me, and His mantle stretched out wide as the heavens. Upon a corner of this mantle I was allowed to rest, and lay down to sleep with a blissful sense of repose. The dream has recurred again and again in the course of my life, and, sleeping or waking, it has been in my deepest sorrows a Divine consolation that I might thus rest in heavenly keeping, free from every care."

After severe paroxysms of suffering she would be heard to murmur, "I rest on the Divine mantle, He permits it. Although I suffer so much, I am happy. God is with me, and I am in His hand. He knows what is best, and why it must be thus."

Dr. Necher had prolonged his stay in Berlin on Rahel's account, and saw her once or twice each day. Other physicians, who also saw her, agreed with him, however, in thinking the danger not at present imminent. Upon the

6th of March she took a few steps up and down her room, she received visits from her brother, from her sister-in-law, and from Bettine von Arnim. After the last of these Dora arranged her comfortably for the night, and Varnhagen left her, with some hope that she might sleep. But sleep came to none of them. Æt. 62. 1833.

"It was about midnight, and I was still awake, when Dora called me," writes Varnhagen. "I was to come, she was much worse. Instead of sleep, Rahel had found only suffering, which had now become decided spasm of the breast. Her state was now almost as critical as in the attack a week ago. The medicines left in case of such an exigency (held rather possible than probable) were again tried, with little effect. The frightful struggle continued, and the beloved sufferer, writhing in Dora's arms, cried several times, 'This pressure against her breast was not to be borne, was crushing her heart out.' The breathing became painfully oppressed. She complained that it was getting into her head now, that she felt like a cloud there: then she leant back. A deceptive hope of some alleviation gleamed for an instant, only to go out for ever. The eyes were dimmed, the mouth distorted, the limbs powerless! In this state the doctors found her: their remedies were useless. An unconscious hour and half, during which the breast occasionally struggled in spasmodic efforts, and this noble life breathed out its last."

CHAPTER XII.

None may grudge the dead
Libations from full cups. Unless we choose
To look back to the hills behind us spread,
The plains before us sadden and confuse;
If orphaned, we are disinherited.—CASA GUIDI WINDOWS.

VARNHAGEN was thus left alone, to look back upon eighteen years of married life, made perfect by entire congeniality of purpose, and by a mutual love which time had only served to strengthen. From Count Custine he received a notice of Rahel, accompanied by the words, "I have said what my heart dictated, but it is not enough; because one has to make her known to those who are indifferent, and indifference is imbecile. Of a nature so different to most others the world knows but too little. I wish that a collection of her letters could be translated, but the work would be so difficult that I could not possibly undertake it. I have translated one fragment in my sketch of her, and I could write half a volume with less trouble than it has cost me to express one thought of this living soul in a foreign language." This sketch was published in the "Revue des Deux Mondes," in December, 1837. We quote from it a few expressions.

"Rahel was a woman quite as remarkable as Madame de Staël, in her intellectual faculties, her fertility of

thought, her clearness of soul, her goodness of heart; in eloquence she far surpassed the author of 'Corinne,' but she wrote nothing. The silence of such a soul is power. With more vanity, so superior an intelligence would have endeavoured to make a public; Rahel only wished for friends. She spoke, to communicate to others from her abundant life, never for the sake of being admired. . . .

"She possessed the intellect of a philosopher and the heart of an apostle. . . .

"To a person who saw life as Rahel saw it, nothing was ever petty, or vulgar, or impossible. . . .

"If I had never known Madame Varnhagen, I should never have been persuaded, as I am, of a consoling truth, that it is the vulgar who always judge a man by what he has done, only higher minds are able to appreciate him for what he is capable of doing. It is thus that Rahel judged others; it is thus that she has a right to demand to be judged of us."

Baron Brinckmann also, at seventy years of age, sent to Varnhagen, from Stockholm, a history of his friendship with Rahel, taken from diaries of other days. It is perhaps the clearest example we have of the stimulating power which Rahel exercised, and of the way in which her genius for ministration was constantly putting itself forth, directly or indirectly, for the good of her friends. Upon the occasion of the Baron's first introduction to Rahel he had been rather summarily put down by a sarcastic lady in the company. As he handed Rahel down the staircase, he asked, "Did you believe in what my opponent said?"

"Not in the least," replied Rahel, "although her sharp answers were perfectly well deserved, and, as I saw, they wounded you: the more deeply, that your own remarks were not genuine, not even true. It is always vanity merely which tries by means of a witty turn to batter down a truth, however awkwardly it may have been advanced, without regard for the convictions of those who differ. Vanity deserves no pity. If you were my friend I should teach you something different."

Friends they became before long.

"What I had vainly sought," writes the enthusiastic Baron, "in the councils of sages, in the outer splendours of life, in the temples of the devout, simple truth, independence of thought, fervour of feeling, I found, like a holy revelation, in the 'attic-room' of this rare thinker.

"One day when we had become more intimate she said, with a half melancholy smile, 'You are still like an aspiring child, full of hope, and ignorant of his own predilections and powers. God and virtue are to you blossoms of child-like feeling; but you are not destined to remain for ever a child, or, even like most other people, an unripe man. You must become free and independent or you will become bad; and if you pay blind homage to established prejudices, worse still. Is there any worse slavery than the fear of men, however you may gild and polish your chains? . . Courage —moral courage is everything. External heroism is a trifle, often trivial enough. But courage of the heart, self-confidence against a world of prejudices, your own and other people's, if you had but that you would become firm, cheerful, wise—as I am! . . . God and virtue! In early life we are taught to utter these words, so full of meaning,

like a charm; but what do we understand by them? All or nothing; according to what we are ourselves, all or nothing.'"

Another of the many wise injunctions preserved by the Baron from his friendly Sibyl was the warning to receive nothing at second-hand. "Not so much because the material may be adulterated as because its cheapness enervates the mind, so that a man no longer toils to dig and work out for himself. No enthusiasm should come to us from without, the flame should spring up on the altar of our own soul. All depends on our own working out; the object is of far less consequence. Just as the fact of loving is often of more importance to us than the object loved. . . . For a long time I could not understand why I never could get into my head all the fine things that other people learn by heart. I thought I was stupid, but I have since learned that it was my teachers who were so. They might have understood that my spirit was already too full, too restless, too occupied, to be able readily to acquire extraneous things. In my little head there was no room for novelties until what was already there had been sifted and arranged."

Baron Brinckmann closes his charming little psychological sketch with a warning to Varnhagen concerning the proposed publication of Rahel's letters. He entreats him not to make too free a revelation of the sanctuary of her heart to the outer world, the common herd of people, who as a rule are "friends to no man." To him, her earlier letters especially, with their rapid thoughts suggested or only half expressed, were a "kind of Sanscrit," to be revealed only to the privileged Brahmin order of

friends. Such a caution was perhaps not altogether superfluous. Varnhagen's pride in his wife was boundless, and his taste, possibly, somewhat less fastidious than that of the sensitive receptive Swede.

A small collection of letters was first published, and received with general sympathy. It was followed by a fuller edition, entitled, "Rahel: a Memorial for her Friends." Only with such kindly human interest can these letters be appreciated or understood. Like all lyrical utterances, they demand a certain sympathy, a certain "rapport," on the part of the reader. They were written in full reliance upon such sympathy, from heart to heart. Extending as they do over some thirty years, they are the expression of a life of varied interests and active effort; they are to be read at intervals, at leisure, for growth and solace, not from any vain curiosity. The style is as varied as the mood of the writer, now clear, forcible, terse to abruptness; and at another time so verbless and incoherent, that only the delicate fragrance of a thought is discernible through the labyrinth of words. They bring Rahel before us, not as a sentimentalist, but as a great thinker, whose genius placed her abreast of the foremost men of her time, and who stands a living proof of the power of broad sympathies, mental culture, and persistent cheerfulness to raise a woman above the narrowing effects of personal weakness and the pettiness of those circumstances by which her lot is inevitably surrounded.

"How is it," writes Varnhagen, in 1855, "that Rahel is so difficult to understand? Because people will bring with them their own false views and distort Rahel's. If she speaks of her own failings, inclinations, experiences,

they do not know how to take it. Her self-commendation, though it may proceed from the most simple misapprehension, is looked upon as mere vanity, and is dragged down to their own level, while her self-blame is magnified to excess. If they would only look upon Rahel as a most simple and natural character, gifted to a rare degree with passionate benevolence and the broadest intellect, pulsing with eager life, always abreast with the passing moment, full of goodness, activity, and cheerfulness — their picture would be at least just and true, if not complete. She lived in broad practical daylight, was never abstracted, but always took her full share in all that was passing, whether great or trivial. From lesser detail, she always rose to broad and general views. What people call "ways of her own," Rahel had not; there was nothing disturbing or self-assertive about her; in her most lively moments she was always modest and self-restrained."

Although the whole charm and interest of the *salon* proper died with Rahel, Varnhagen continued to see many guests. Not only early friends, now fast diminishing in number, but new acquaintances, visitors to Berlin, literary men and dilettanti. By common consent he had come to fill a patriarchal position in the literary world. It was altogether congenial to him, and when not overworked, he received gladly, with or without recommendation, those rising authors who knew the value of a good word from Varnhagen von Ense.

One frequent visitor of the olden time was the weird Romanticist, Bettine von Arnim. Her character was still that of the spoiled child; the same exacting fancies and dictatorial caprices which at sixteen had been so charm-

ing, came with a different grace from a slovenly little old woman of sixty. She would sit and talk by the hour with Varnhagen about the affairs of her brother, Clemens Brentano, and about those endless publishing troubles, which she at last settled by publishing for herself, and starting the firm of "Von Arnim." More to Varnhagen's taste were those leisure hours spent with Henriette Herz. Sitting out upon the balcony of her pleasant house in the Thier-Garten, beside the still stately beauty, he would find some consolation in talking to her of Rahel and of that society of the past to which they both had given life and inspiration. With the same untiring patience she would listen to him and to Humboldt as they told the story of their political grievances, or bemoaned the superficialness, the feebleness, the vexation, the ennui of modern Berlin life.

"Other generations have arisen," writes Henriette Herz in her latest days. "I stand as a ruin amongst them. Before me new, not always intelligible, life; behind me, a field of the dead. But amid the fresh verdure of the new world one companion of the olden time still stands strong in his unconquerable youthfulness. Whoever wishes to form an impartial judgment of what I have said respecting the generous and self-denying friendships of other days, should well consider his unresting labours in the service of his generation. Many a waking night does he still pass at his writing-table.

"It may be true of the present day that other interests predominate, that life is broader, its objects more varied; that the individual becomes merged in the community at some self-sacrifice, and thus such a time as we have been

considering, with all its failings and its virtues, can never be conjured back again. But in the present generation many of its virtues are entirely wanting, and this very want is accounted a merit. Hence much of the pure and noble sentiment in which that time was rich is looked upon as a pernicious outgrowth, happily uprooted and cast aside with a compassionate smile. It makes me think of the immortal fox and the pendent grapes. They may continue to call me 'the eulogist of the past.' Nevertheless I am not ignorant of the present, and who knows whether its cold intellect, its half-concealed or often boldly bristling egotism, its paramount striving after material good, is to be preferred to that personal devotion to the interests of others, to that effort, so abundantly fruitful, after intellectual good, which characterised the generation now passed away."[1]

On October 22, 1847, Henriette Herz died, after a brief illness, at the age of 83. To her, with her fine constitution, her elastic, cheerful temperament, life had been a lighter experience than was possible to Rahel, whose susceptible nerves made her suffer from incessant change of mood. Henriette, full of tender feeling and strong attachment, guided by thoughtful judgment, maintained a placid course; scaling no heights, plunging into no depths of thought or emotion, attaching and influencing her friends by her reticent tenderness and her practical sagacity; Rahel, always conscious of "the depths" (as she phrased it), found the use and enjoyment of life only in proportion to the sustained energy with which she could swim above those depths. Any day or hour, failing di-

[1] "Erinnerungen," von Henriette Herz. J. Furst.

gestion or shrinking nerves might cause a sudden plunge into them, and for her the whole aspect of life would change, and healthy effort become persistent struggle. With all her culture, all her strength of will, Rahel was quite unable to attain to the bright equanimity of Henriette Herz. Her abundant compensation, however, lay in her genuine humour and in her recuperative power. To the humorous element in her character, sadness and mirth were each as necessary as cloud and sunshine to the April rainbow. As Shelley tells us,—

> Our sincerest laughter
> With some pain is fraught:
> Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Henriette owed much of her social influence to her personal beauty, as well as to her dignified repose of manner, which conveyed a sense of power. She was docile under the social régime, and somewhat punctilious about small social requirements. Rahel was pre-eminently unworldly, she yielded to many of the exactions of society under protest, and was mentally above them all. It is not easy to understand the kind of fascination by which Rahel held both men and women in admiring friendship through years of change and separation. Much of it was due to womanly sympathy, much also to that kind of intellectual influence which in reference to Goethe has been called "dæmonic;" an irresistible power exercised apart from her own will; a power which has been cleverly if not completely defined as "*presence of mind in combination with a keen knowledge of men.*" [1]

Another marked difference between the friends lay in their feeling for nature. Henriette loved the town, its

[1] Appendix O.

busy life, its vigour, its friendly association, even its noisy traffic, and, despite her intimacy with the young Romanticists of her day, cared little for the poetry of nature. She was of a constructive, decorative turn, fond of art, especially of sculpture, and believing much in the embellishment of life. To Rahel, on the other hand, though also town-bred, it seemed part of the irony of her destiny that her years should all be spent in the perpetual sight of walls and housetops. "Could I but live," she exclaims, "where I could step from my window out upon the greensward!" Rahel is representative even of this element of thought in the troubled mind of her day. She echoed the half pantheistic adoration, the passionate longing after nature which found utterance in Tieck, Novalis, and in Wordsworth. Grand scenery she never saw, all her delight lay in a sudden gleam of sunlight on a distant hill or tree-top, in an early violet, or in the quiet shadow of the woods at Teplitz. Her care was not, like Henriette's, for the embellishment of life, but for its full enjoyment; she was thankful for the simple delight of existence when permitted by her changing health; and believed in *savoir-vivre*, like a genuine Savoyard.

Varnhagen in his old age did not become conservative. His liberalism retained its broad character, and it is satisfactory to find him speaking strongly against the attitude of those German Liberals who could honour the love of freedom as a virtue in Germany and denounce it as a crime in Hungary or Lombardy. Heine relied upon this fidelity when, from his death-bed in Paris, he sent to Varnhagen a young democratic friend—Ferdinand Lassalle[1]—who

[1] Appendix P.

afterwards became one of the boldest writers and best abused men of modern Germany.

In his letter of introduction Heine writes:—

"My friend, Herr Lassalle, who will bring you this letter, is a young man of the most remarkable intellectual power. He combines thorough, accurate, and varied learning; an inexhaustible faculty of exposition, and an acute perceptive power, with energy of will and *habilité* in action, to a degree which fills me with amazement. I anticipate the most active assistance from him if his sympathy with me does not die out. In any case it will be a pleasure to have known a man thus uniting learning and capacity, talent and character. . . . Herr Lassalle bears unmistakably the stamp of the new time, which knows nothing of that modesty and self-abnegation with which we, more or less hypocritically, were trammelled and besotted in our day. The new generation means to enjoy itself and make the best of the visible; we of the older one bowed humbly before the invisible, yearned after shadow-kisses and 'blue-flower'[1] fragrances, denied ourselves, wept and smiled, and were perhaps happier than those fierce gladiators who walk so proudly to meet their death struggle."

Varnhagen continued to the last to act upon that motto which many years before he had selected for Prussia—

Through culture to freedom.

But the end of his labours came somewhat suddenly.

[1] The "blue flower" of Novalis became typical of Romanticism.

While engaged in playing a game of chess he was seized with pulmonic apoplexy, which terminated fatally on the 10th October, 1858. The end of more than threescore years of active life;—but a day in the course of history, and like a day in its eager dawn, its toilsome noon, its weary, satiate close—a brief yesterday of seed-time followed by the long fruit-bearing to-morrow.

NOTE ON THE PORTRAIT.

THE portrait of Rahel which accompanies this volume is the same as that published by Varnhagen with her letters in 1834. It has been printed for us from the original steel engraving, by the same publishers, Messrs. Duncker and Humblot, of Berlin. That it was not, however, considered satisfactory by the family, we may conclude from the following remarks of Varnhagen:—

"The portrait of Rahel which precedes the collection of her letters gives no faithful representation of the real features and expression of her face. It is from a miniature painting taken in Carlsruhe, in 1817, by Daffinger, of Vienna. The original was a spirited, and in some respects very successful likeness, but in the rigid steel engraving its whole character is changed. The outlines of mouth and nose are so exaggerated as to spoil the proportion and injure the entire face."

There did exist another portrait by Friedel, in pastels, also unsatisfactory. Rahel wrote of it:—"My picture at home displeases me greatly. I see that it is like me, but I also see that I must often look very different, or I should be too repulsive." When about twenty-five years of age a medallion of her was executed by Friedrich Tieck the sculptor. It appears to have been excellent as a likeness and pleasing as a work of art. Being most anxious to have the best possible representation of Rahel, we made application to Frau Assing Grimelli for permission to photograph and publish this, which Varnhagen held to be the best likeness, but we regret to say that for some unassigned reason the request was declined. We have, therefore, to rest content with the only available portrait. The couplet at the foot may perhaps be rendered into English thus:—

Simplicity—God's gift—we highly prize;
But her without it, nameless we despise.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A. (Page 13.)

THE correspondence between Rahel and David Veit occupies about two years of the student life which the latter spent in Gottingen and Jena. It was published by Varnhagen in a separate volume, about 1835. The individual character of each of the writers, expressed with entire frankness, gives to these letters a peculiar charm. Unlike most German effusions of that day, they contain no rhapsody, no mutual flattery, no touch of sentiment. Veit was, according to Varnhagen, "a man of rare gifts, and what is still more rare, of gifts well combined and balanced." He lived much alone, prizing lightly ordinary friends and acquaintances. Rahel at this time was bravely enduring the pain of renunciation, with heart and intellect alike hungering for sympathy and occupation. Their letters have the interest of a dramatic dialogue. Veit awaited Rahel's replies always with impatience. "Your last," he writes one day, "was such a festive occasion to me, that I immediately ordered up chocolate to complete the entertainment." He settled as a physician in Hamburg, and died of fever while attending the French hospitals there, in February, 1814.

APPENDIX B. (Page 17.)

THIS account of Varnhagen's visit will be found in the first volume of his "Denkwürdigkeiten," p. 137, new edition. It has also been partly translated by Mr. Carlyle, in his Essay upon "Rahel and Varnhagen von Ense," which English readers will find in Vol. VI. of his collected works.

APPENDIX C. (Page 28.)

SCHARNHORST was aware of the process of degeneration going on in the Prussian army. Bravery and discipline still remained among the ranks, but the more important posts became filled by showy incapables. The army, while living upon the prestige of the past, sank into an or-

namental appendage to the State, until, after the battle of Jena, Scharnhorst could thus write of it: "It is true that the Prussian army is animated by a fine spirit, that it is not wanting in courage or careful training; but, managed as it is and will be, it neither can nor will achieve anything great or decisive."

APPENDIX D. (Page 37.)

HENRI CAMPAN was one of several young Frenchmen holding offices under Napoleon in Berlin. The French postal arrangements were in his hands. The "Gallomania," common to all Berliners under the auspices of Frederick the Great, still served to keep up a feeling of personal friendliness toward these young men. They, on their part, made themselves socially agreeable, and did their best to alleviate the tyrannical pressure brought to bear upon the unoffending citizens by the authorities at Paris. Campan attached himself strongly to Rahel, and when forced to leave Berlin found nothing in Parisian life to console him for the delight of her friendship or the intellectual stimulus of her society.

APPENDIX E. (Page 52.)

ALLUSION is here made, no doubt, to the Chevalier Raphael Urquijo, a Spanish gentleman present on that evening. Through the Spanish ambassador in Berlin he had been introduced to Rahel. A sudden and passionate attachment sprang up between them. We find nowhere any details of this affair and its apparently abrupt termination. The correspondence which contained its history was put by Rahel into the hands of Varnhagen. It was lost with other papers during the disturbances of 1813. He speaks of it as a record of intense passion, grief, despair, a soul-tragedy; but at the same time characteristically regrets that it can never be published.

APPENDIX F. (Page 57.)

"THE ancient, famous, and knightly race of Von Ense," says an old Westphalian chronicler, "became divided into two branches." Of these, one was known in the twelfth century by the name of Varnhagen von Ense, a name which descended through a long line of feudal lords, church dignitaries, and town councillors, to the burgo-masters, lawyers, and physicians of later times. Towards the close of the eighteenth century one Johann Andrias Jacob Varnhagen von Ense settled in

Dusseldorf, and soon received the appointments of town-physician and electoral consulting physician. His eldest son, August, was born February 21st, 1875; he married Rahel Levin in September, 1814, and died at Berlin, October 10th, 1858. We have passed over the ample and complacent details of Varnhagen's earlier love affairs, among which the curious reader may mystify himself in the original "Denkwurdigkeiten."

APPENDIX G. (Page 87.)

LIFTING this legendary veil, we come upon an ugly fact for the credit of the most civilised nation in the world. The head of Schill was severed from the body and sent in spirits to King Jerome at Cassel, that he might "make himself merry" (*lustik*) over it. After this refined personal gratification he made a present of the "robber-head" to Brugmann, the naturalist, in Leyden, who had it preserved among other monstrosities. Knettelbeck begged for it in vain. Not until 1835 was it, with much solemn commemoration, laid beside Schill's murdered comrades at Brunswick. Of these six hundred, the officers were condemned, some to the galleys, the rest to death. The latter—eleven young men all under thirty years of age—were had up before a French court-martial and sentenced to death by the aid of a law against "burglary and theft!" Schmidt-Weissenfels, *Charakter-Skizzen.* Joachim Knettlebeck, *Bürger zu Kolberg. Eine Lebensbeschreibung.* 1821. Third Edition, 1863. Brockhaus, Leipsic.

APPENDIX H. (Page 92.)

THE letters of Varnhagen to Rahel, with some from her not published in the early collection (1834), and which belong to this period of their history, were published in 1874 by Frau Assing-Grimelli, niece to Varnhagen. They contain the most private details of the long engagement, of all its harassing uncertainties, separations, misunderstandings. They are, however, scarcely intelligible without previous study of the history of both writers. The later letters of Varnhagen, from 1809 to 1812, written to Rahel during the campaign of Wagram, from Prague, Paris, and Steinfurt, are very interesting, and fill with lifelike pictures the interval of which we can only give a meagre outline. The publication of the inexhaustible treasures of the "Varnhagen Remains" still continues. They are being issued by Brockhaus of Leipsic.

APPENDIX J. (Page 105.)

BY the kind permission of Messrs. Longmans and Co., this letter, with two others and some isolated paragraphs, are reprinted from an article in "Fraser's Magazine," for July, 1872.

APPENDIX K. (Page 150.)

THESE "Diaries" were edited by Varnhagen, accompanied by a biographical sketch of Gentz, the best account of him which at present exists. Although personally on the most friendly terms with Gentz, Varnhagen never approved of his political work at Vienna in 1814, and still less of his share in the unpopular Carlsbad Decrees of the year following. In later times he wrote with some bitterness of the *Schriftsteller-staatsmann*, who with his delicate gloved hand could rivet those political chains in which his countrymen were to writhe or stagnate for a whole generation.

APPENDIX L. (Page 219.)

THROUGH the kind courtesy of Mrs. Grote we are enabled to give the reply of Gentz to this letter. We have permission to reprint the translation, which was issued by her for private circulation. The later letters from Gentz to Rahel nearly all relate to that Indian summer of his life, his love for Fanny Elssler. He tells the history of it with characteristic frankness, saying, "You are, however, the only person in the world to whom I could hazard such avowals, nor could I even have hazarded them with you unless this letter were going by an Austrian courier to Berlin. . . . We two ought never to separate as long as we breathe. Pray chime in with this sentiment, and appease speedily the longing of your faithful friend, GENTZ."

In reply to Rahel's letter of October 9, 1830, he writes:—"I await your printed sheets with inexpressible impatience. I rejoice in the thought of them like a child over a Christmas present, for I know beforehand that they will not only satisfy my understanding but also awaken emotions throughout my whole soul. That is the sort of reading of which I now stand in need, as a refreshment after other sorts which come to me as a daily obligation. You must, of course, be aware that a number of your *spirituel* sayings incessantly resound in my ears—that I repeat them to myself a thousand times, and that I

never can forget them as long as I live. . . . In the freshest years of my youth I was never so wrapt up in poetry as I am now. At no time of our lives should *we two* have understood each other better; and from the bottom of my heart I echo your exclamation, 'What great and splendid purpose can heaven have in view in keeping us two apart?'

"On one passage in your last letter I cannot refrain from remarking, because my ancient *amour-propre* has been awakened by it. You praise Schlegel 'because he had a sieve in his ear, which suffered nothing bad to pass through.' If I rightly understand this, it would run, when translated into my phraseology, 'He had a classical ear.' Should this be your meaning, I must begin by remarking that the phrase does not at all apply to Heine; for, much as I love and admire his poems, I cannot possibly deny that his *sieve* suffers much bad matter to pass through, and that his style often degenerates into glaring bad taste. Your pretty saying would have been much more applicable to me when I was an author. I cannot fancy that you can ever have taken much notice of my writings, which must have been in almost every respect foreign and heterogeneous to your feelings; but for that precise reason I feel obliged to claim what is *mine by right.* Serious, and dry, and unæsthetical as the subjects were upon which I wrote, I must still repeat, to my own credit, that I have never offended against good taste, and this in polemical matters is a very special merit. Really I am not blinded by vanity on this occasion. I have entirely forgotten that I ever was an author, and for the last twenty years I have not looked at a line of my printed works, the 'Protocols of Congress' excepted. A little while ago a man who reads very well read to me aloud the preface of a certain book on the 'Political Balance,' and I was altogether astonished that I could ever have written so well. Pray read this preface once over, only for a joke, and then tell me yourself whether it was not something like a style. Schlegel has written but a few pages which in point of style will bear comparison with it.

"It is full time for me to conclude. This is the longest letter which has come from my pen for years past; it will give you pleasure, I know well. Reward me with a speedy answer, for I really languish for one. To be understood and loved is the highest enjoyment in the world next to that which the genuine passion of love affords. In our present correspondence both are confounded in one. Forwards! therefore. God be with you.

"GENTZ."

Again on November 25, 1830.

". . . . If you can find some leisure moments, pray write me now and then a few words. They need not even be *letters*, certainly not *classical letters*. You are *la Romantique* itself; you were so before the word was invented; and the sparks of your wit cast their light over a far wider range of ground than whole sheets of dissertations."

July 8, 1831.

" . . . I think frequently of you. It is a comfort to me to be understood by you, and you understand *me* better than I understand *you*. For you were always a deep mysterious being, whose workings cannot be followed except by the aid of constant personal intercourse. I, on the other hand, am an *old child*, of very simple structure, whose infirmities and good qualities are alike seen through, by a sharp eye like yours, at a single glance. Both of us, thank Heaven, have continued young; but in you, though no fair and noble sentiment is unknown to your bosom, the intellect has kept the ascendency—in me, at least, feeling and sensibility. If you think this remark paradoxical or false, pray refute it. That will, at least, procure me a letter from you; and should you have drawn the conclusion from my long and stupid silence that I no longer set a very high price upon your letters, I entreat you to divest yourself of this erroneous impression."

November 13, 1831.

" . . . The assurance that you are still kind to me will be at this moment especially welcome, since I am looking forward to a truly mournful period of existence. You recollect my lamentations about the absence of Fanny last year. That you may conceive in what state of spirits I am now, I must acquaint you that since then my connection with her has become closer and more heartfelt even to a still higher degree—that to her society I have sacrificed everything, absolutely everything which can possibly pass under the name of entertainment, diversion, social amusement, &c., &c.; and that even in my head, sound and vigorous as it still continues, I can discover nothing capable of filling up the dreadful chasm which this year's separation from her leaves behind in my heart.

" Pray address to me a few words of comfort! Let some sparks of

light out of your strong and bright soul fall upon the darkness which surrounds me! Think of me both in your joyful and in your sorrowful hours. No change of destiny can extinguish in me that which indissolubly binds to you your faithful friend, "GENTZ.

"P.S.—Salute Varnhagen most cordially for me. One becomes more and more estranged from all one's friends! What a tasteless affair life is, after all."

Gentz died in the following year. A monument to his memory was erected by Fanny Elssler. We may remind the reader of the interesting essay upon Gentz in Mr. Hayward's republished "Essays," Vol. I. It concludes with this just remark:—

"Yet it is by German modes of thought and conduct that German men and women must principally be judged. The moral atmosphere in which they lived, with their temptations and opportunities, must be kept constantly in view when they are arraigned at the bar of European public opinion; and a purely English standard of right and wrong would obviously lead to unjust or uncharitable conclusions when applied to a Rahel or a Gentz."

APPENDIX M. (Page 238.)

SAINT-MARTIN was made known in Germany by Rahel, as in France by Count Custine, Sainte-Beuve, and others. He was born at Amboise, in 1743, and lived through great part of the French Revolution in Paris, enrolled as a member of the National Guard, and carefully conforming to all the duties of a citizen, while at the same time publishing his boldest writings. He was a man of original thought as well as of great learning; he studied the most occult sciences, and attended lectures even at the age of sixty years, shortly before his death in 1803.

"If we are to know the man," writes Mons. Tourlet, "we must consider his actions. The whole life of the 'unknown philosopher' is a perpetual illustration of the principle which he laid down in his writings and carried out himself most perfectly.

"'It is well always to keep our eyes fixed upon knowledge, lest we should imagine that we already know something; upon justice, that we may hold ourselves free from prejudice; and upon all virtues, that we may not believe we possess them.'" A short sketch of Saint-Martin, with two dialogues, may be found in Varnhagen's "Vermischte Schriften."

APPENDIX N. (Page 243.)

THESE letters have never been published. In Mr. Stigand's "Life of Heine" we learn that they were sold, with other papers, to the Austrian Government, and are said to be among the secret archives of the Imperial Court. In the same work will be found a full and interesting account of St. Simonianism in Paris; recording, however, less of the philosophy St. Simon than of the eccentricities of his followers.

APPENDIX O. (Page 256.)

THIS definition is given in the admirable Essay on "The Influence of Goethe," in the volumes of literary Essays by Mr. Richard Holt Hutton.

APPENDIX P. (Page 257.)

A VERY full account of the writings of Ferdinand Lassalle will be found in the February and following numbers of "Das Deutsche Rundschan." Also in an article in "The Fortnightly," vol. v. 1869.

The only German book concerning Rahel of which we know and have been able to avail ourselves, is that of Schmidt-Weissenfels, "Rahel, und ihre Zeit." A clever but brief sketch, valuable rather to Germans than to the ordinary English reader.

THE END.

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